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November 2004

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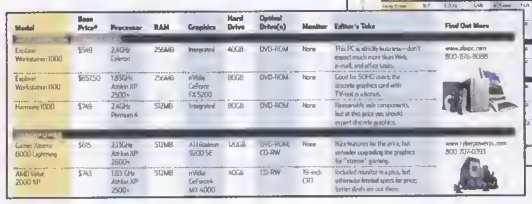
With over 500 products in this issue, *Computer Shopper* is the most comprehensive guide to today's technology. And our new design will help you pinpoint the product information you need—*fast.*

MORE PRODUCTS

- Over 45 in-depth reviews every month
- New at-a-glance spec boxes
- Second Opinion gives user feedback

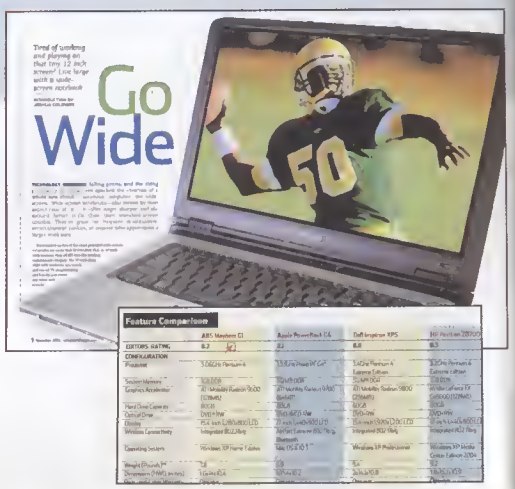
EXPANDED COVERAGE

- New 20-page TechMarket Section
- Comprehensive product guide
- Easy-to-compare chart format



HELPFUL USER TIPS

- Expert user advice
- Two step-by-step upgrade guides
- Smart shopping recommendations



EASY COMPARISON

- Side-by-side evaluations
- At-a-glance performance ratings
- Detailed technical specs

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- Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional
- 40GB[2] Hard Drive
- 15" XGA TFT Display
- 256MB DDR SDRAM
- CD-RW/DVD-ROM Combo Drive
- 1-Year Limited Warranty[3]

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UPGRADES
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- Add a Port Replicator for $199.99
- Add an Additional Power Adapter for $99.99

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  - Intel® PRO/Wireless Network Connection 802.11b/g[5]
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional
- 60GB[2] Hard Drive
- 17" Widescreen WUXGA (1920x1200) with XBRITE™ LCD Technology
- ErgoBright™ Technology with Smart Display Sensor
- 512MB (256MBx2) RAM
- CD-RW/DVD-ROM Combo Drive
- Bluetooth® Wireless Technology[5]
- 1-Year Limited Warranty[3]

$2,099.99 Lease for only $60 per month.[6]

UPGRADES
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- Add a Port Replicator for $199.99
- Add an Additional Power Adapter for $99.99

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Build-to-Order S170B

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- 40GB[2] Hard Drive
- 13.3" WXGA Display
- 256MB RAM
- Integrated DVD-RW Drive[4]
- Only 4.2 lbs. with Supplied Battery
- 1-Year Limited Warranty[3]

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UPGRADES
- Upgrade to a 60GB[2] Hard Drive for $50
- Add a Large-Capacity Battery for $299.99
- Add a Port Replicator for $199.99
- Add an Additional Power Adapter for $99.99

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S Series

Build-to-Order S170B

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  - Intel® PRO/Wireless Network Connection 802.11b/g[5]
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional
- 60GB[2] Hard Drive
- 13.3" WXGA Display with XBRITE™ LCD Technology
- 512MB RAM (256MBx2)
- Integrated DVD-RW Drive[4]
- Only 4.2 lbs. with Supplied Battery
- 1-Year Limited Warranty[3]

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- Add an Additional Power Adapter for $99.99
- Add a Port Replicator for $199.99

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- 128MB ATI® RADEON™ 9200 Graphics Card
- 1-Year Limited Warranty[3]

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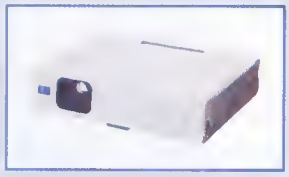
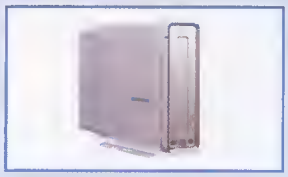


VPL-CX70 LCD Projector

A portable, stylish design with high-brightness picture and easy-to-use auto-setup features. Designed to help the mobile professional deliver brilliant presentations at sales meetings, training seminars—even executive boardrooms.

- Up to 2000 ANSI Lumens Brightness[7]
- Automatic Setup (Focus, Lens, Input, Tilt, Pixel and Keystone)
- Accepts up to XGA Native Resolution (1024x768)
- Accepts Composite, Component and PC Inputs

$1,999.99 Lease for only **$57** per month.[6]



DRX-710UL DVD+R Double Layer/DVD+RW Drive

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- Rechargeable Infolithium® Battery Included

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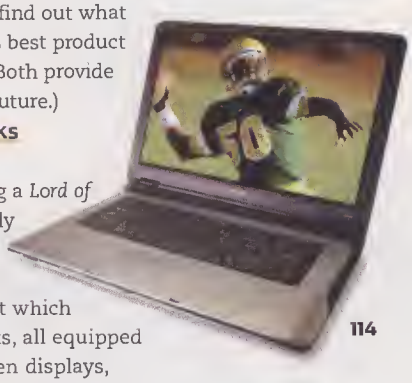

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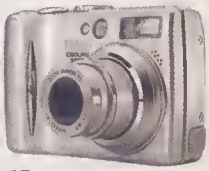

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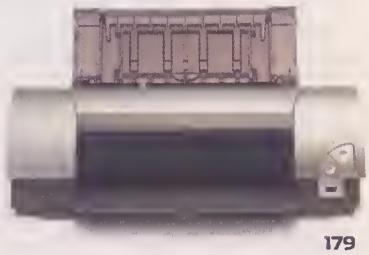

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- Contrast ratio: 500:1
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EDITOR'S NOTE JANICE CHEN

SEEING OUR WORK COALESCE into a crisp, new magazine every 30 days is always gratifying. But what you have in your hands is the result of not one month's work, but the efforts of the greater part of a year. It was in late 2003 that we first put a stake in the ground, determined to make *Computer Shopper* the most comprehensive guide to today's technology.

To do so, we've expanded our content in three areas. The Reviews section builds on our already-beefy product coverage to include more hands-on evaluations (44 this month) and two comparative product roundups, delivering more in-depth reviews than any tech magazine. (Our annual Top 100, p. 92, replaces one of the roundups this month.) And because we know that living with a product is the ultimate test, we've added a Second Opinion page with user feedback on gear we've reviewed.

Our Help & How-To section provides actionable ways to get the most from technology, with features like "30 Searching Secrets" on p. 120. We've also added a second step-by-step Tune-Up article so there's a hardware and software project each month. And you'll find our popular "Computer Cures" column in this section, as well as Nancy Feldman's "Consumer Alert" and a new column by editor Rik Fairlie in which he decides if an emerging technology is "Ready or Not."

Finally, don't miss our new TechMarket section, a 20-page guide to today's technology market (p. 143). This month's easy-to-compare charts include a comprehensive look at desktop and notebook PCs, as well as digital cameras, DVD burners, PDAs, printers, and hard drives. Each month we'll serve up new categories and include shopping tips and recommendations from our editors.

You'll also notice a new design that's more modern, straightforward, and easy to read. We've streamlined our type and tweaked our color palette, and added bolder photography.

For me, seeing the new *Computer Shopper* emerge is especially gratifying because as I went on maternity leave early this year—leaving the magazine under the capable stewardship of Rik Fairlie—we'd just started laying out the new organization of the magazine. For you, it's rewarding because you now have the most comprehensive tech-shopping tool you can find on the newsstand. *—janice.chen@cnet.com*

LETTERS

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See sweepstakes rules on p. 20

CUSTOMER DISSERVICE

Nancy Feldman's column on her experiences with the Garmin StreetPilot 2620 had quite an effect on me ("Vendor Takes the Low Road to Block Customer Returns," September, p. 30). Although my own dealings with Garmin have been much more pleasurable—the company resolved my problems quickly and efficiently—I know what she's talking about. I've seen the industry go from enthusiastic mom-and-pop shops to large companies only interested in increasing the bottom line. Customer service has become so tainted by greed that it's become dangerous to buy hardware or software online or at the local superstore. *Steven R. Volker*

BUT CAN THEY WALK THE WALK?

Your guide to digital music players ("I Want My MP3 Player," August, p. 123) gave some useful specs and information on the differences in types of players, but it could have gone a lot further in answering the questions I really have, like: Will it skip when I run with it? How durable is it if I drop it, leave it on the dashboard, or wear it in the sauna after my cardio-karate class? As far as the differences in file formats your article spends so much time on, most of us know about the many widely available free utilities that can convert digital music files. *James E. Cardona*

ALICE AND BILL WILL BE MISSED

Thirty percent of the reason I subscribe to *Computer Shopper* is because I enjoy "The Hard Edge" so much. The personal-computer industry was founded by zany geeks who had an opinion. I always felt that your magazine was great because of the professional journalism, do-it-yourself articles, and "The Hard Edge," which provided a kind of soul to your magazine. Discontinuing this column is a bad idea. *George H. Metten*

Clarification

ATI Technologies has redesigned the HDTV graphics solution we previewed ("HDTV on Your PC," July, p. 37). Based on further development after we went to press, the product, now called the HDTV Wonder, works with any graphics card that supports Microsoft DirectX 9.0—not just ATI cards.

We want to hear from you.

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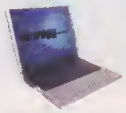

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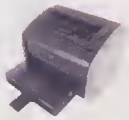

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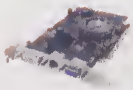

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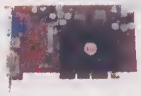

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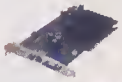

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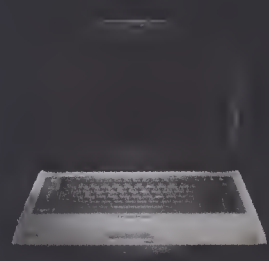

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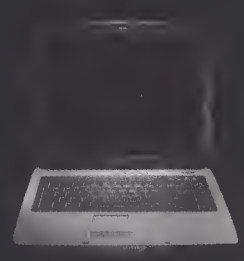

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COMPUTER SHOPPER

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Refilling Stations for Your Printer Are Coming to a Mall Near You

ON YOUR NEXT shopping trip to the mall, you might be able to pick up a refill for your inkjet-printer cartridge. Franchise-based inkjet (and laser-toner) filling stations are appearing in storefronts and mall kiosks around the country, where consumers can have empty ink cartridges refilled for about half the price of a new one.

Refill shops target value-minded customers who don't want to pay $30 or more for a new inkjet cartridge, but they may have an uphill battle against consumers who have tried mediocre home refill kits. "Third-party providers are battling against old perceptions of low-quality refills," says Jana Munford, director of research for printing supplies at research firm Current Analysis.

"The problem with refill cartridges is not really the ink quality, but sloppy refilling and bad procedures," says Daniel Wencel, president of Caboodle Cartridge, a California chain that plans to have 60 stores nationwide by the end of the year. Caboodle uses ultrasound to clean cartridges and vacuum chambers to refill them, charging 55 to 70 percent of the price of a new one.

For printer manufacturers, which make big profits selling cartridges, refills are bad news. Epson, Hewlett-Packard, and Lexmark include chips in their cartridges that stop printing after a certain number of pages have been printed. The companies say the chips maintain print quality and improve customer support, while refill advocates maintain that the chips' true purpose is to make refilling more difficult and prevent use of third-party cartridges.

"We don't recommend refilling to our customers because with refills, they don't get [the] print quality, reliability, and value of HP printing, which is the reason why they bought an HP printer in the first place," says Boris Elisman, HP's vice president of marketing and sales for imaging and printing supplies. *—Kevin Savetz*

Encore, Encore!
Percentage of home theater purchasers who are...

...buying a replacement home theater system
21 percent

...buying an additional home theater system
8 percent

Source: CNET Personal Tech Radar

• TRENDSPOTTING

An overclocked 4GHz desktop is the latest salvo from game-system specialist **Alienware** against the competition. The new Area-51 ALX pushes a standard Intel Pentium 4 chip past its factory speed setting to 4GHz. Intel's fastest current Pentium 4 is at 3.6GHz, and the chip manufacturer won't introduce a 4GHz Pentium 4 until the first quarter of 2005. The desktop includes a special liquid cooling system devised by Alienware to reduce overheating. Also hot is the price: The machine starts at about $4,200.

—Dinesh C. Sharma and John G. Spooner, News.com

Google Exposes Credit-Card Info

Simple queries using the Google search engine can turn up a handful of sites that have posted credit-card information to the Web.

The lists of financial information include hundreds of cardholders' names, addresses, and phone numbers, as well as their credit-card data. Much of the credit-card data that appears in the lists found by Google may no longer be valid, but News.com called several people listed and verified that the credit-card numbers were authentic.

The query highlights increasing concern that knowledgeable Web surfers can turn up sensitive information by mining the world's best-known search engine.

A company source says the search firm has a tool for Webmasters to remove pages from the archive, if they find that parts of their site violate laws or regulations. Moreover, the company has decided to allow anyone to request the removal from search results of any document that includes a Social Security or credit-card number.

—Robert Lemos, News.com

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September 21, 2004
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Network Storage Center *
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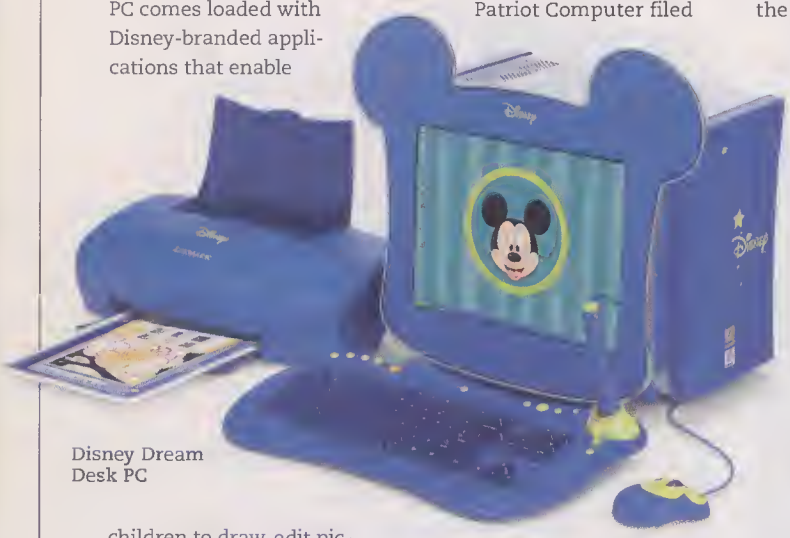
New PC Includes an Old Mouse—Mickey Mouse

BANKING ON the huge popularity that Mickey Mouse enjoys with children worldwide, Disney has unveiled a desktop PC with a monitor sporting the ears of the cartoon character.

The Disney Dream Desk PC comes loaded with Disney-branded applications that enable children to draw, edit pictures, create music, and write and direct their own movies. The housing for the LCD screen is Mickey-shaped, and the PC's (other) mouse is designed for small hands.



Disney Dream Desk PC

The children's-PC idea has been tried before, but without much success. Toy giant Mattel launched Barbie and Hot Wheels computers four years ago, but its partner Patriot Computer filed for bankruptcy soon after taking orders.

Disney's desktop, built by German PC maker Medion, comes with a 2.66GHz Intel Celeron D 330 processor and a 3D-graphics card from ATI Technologies. Embedded speakers, a DVD/CD-RW combination drive, and a digital pen are also included. The system is preloaded with the Windows XP operating system and software for e-mail filtering, Internet filtering, and pop-up blocking.

Also bundled with the Dream Desk PC are several popular Disney games including Mahjongg, Extremely Goofy Skateboarding, and Adventures in Typing with Timon & Pumbaa—and a 14-day access pass for Disney's ToonTown Online.

The computer will retail for $599, with the ear-bedecked monitor sold separately for $299. It's stocked at Disney's own retail outlets and online stores, as well as retail store CompUSA.

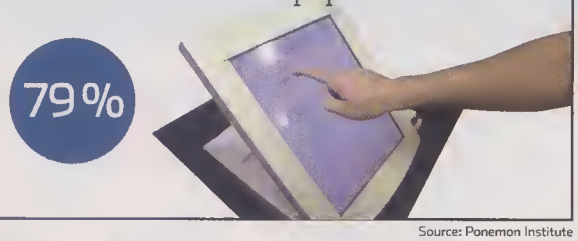
—News.com Staff

Public Gives E-Ballots Vote of Confidence

A NEW SET of polls conducted by the Ponemon Institute suggests that high-tech security experts have significantly less confidence in the security and accuracy of e-voting tools than does the public at large.

81 percent of security professionals said they had "no confidence or little confidence" in the security and reliability of e-voting machines. Just 25 percent of the general public said they had similarly strong reservations—and their main concern was voters' reaction to the machines, not the devices' integrity.

Percentage of ordinary citizens who believe e-voting would be as accurate as or more accurate than paper ballots:



Source: Ponemon Institute

Despite the apparent vote of confidence from the public, Larry Ponemon, chairman of the Ponemon Institute, says policymakers should still be very careful before depending on e-voting systems. The concerns of security professionals could filter down to ordinary voters and ultimately undermine the credibility of election results, or even dissuade people from voting, he says.

"The technology may or may not be good," Ponemon says. "But to the extent that people might change their voting patterns based on [their perceptions of] this technology, that could change the outcome." *—John Borland, News.com*

Sony Zooms In With New TV Tech

Hoping to reenergize one of its core businesses, Sony has announced technology allowing viewers to zoom in, pan, and tilt their perspective in TV broadcasts.

Sony says that the new DRC-MFv2, or Digital Reality Creation MultiFunction, controller chip would help to unlock and take greater advantage of the level of detail available in high-definition digital video. The chip can interpolate a standard TV or 480- or 720-pixel HD signal and re-create it in full 1,920x1,080-pixel high-definition quality.

The chip and technology are part of Sony's larger effort to boost the fortunes of one of its more profitable product categories, televisions. Televisions have been one of the key contributors to Sony's consumer-electronics division, which is the largest contributor to revenue. The company, however, has been caught off guard with the market's transition to flat-panel televisions.

Sony has been fighting back and making significant headway with its Grand Wega line of rear-projection televisions and has been making investments to make it more nimble in producing LCD-based sets. Shipments of LCD televisions are up for Sony, but having to compete for the limited number of LCD panels has forced the company and other TV makers to look to invest in the panel market.

The company says the DRC-MFv2 chip will be used in future Wega TV models.

—Richard Shim, News.com

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SAMSUNG TFT-LCD

A 3D LCD Monitor, With No Funny Glasses Required

SHARP has created a desktop monitor that lets you see pictures and graphics in 3D without having to wear special glasses.

The LL-151-3D is a 15-inch LCD monitor that employs 3D technology Sharp first showed off in late 2002. The company has already incorporated the technology into screens for phones and notebooks; the new monitor, which Sharp had originally hoped to release by the end of 2003, marks the technology's debut for desktops.

The monitor can be thought of as a thin-film transistor, or TFT, sandwich. It contains two TFT panels separated by a parallax barrier. The barrier causes the monitor to create two slightly different pixel images, one for each eye. This tricks the brain into thinking that any objects displayed are three-dimensional. The 3D functionality can be turned off so that content such as spreadsheets and e-mails can be viewed in standard 2D mode.

"The fourth wave of LCD technology is here, and Sharp is at the forefront, delivering a practical solution that allows users the freedom to view both 2D and 3D images in one monitor," Ian Matthew, 3D business development manager for Sharp Systems of America, said in a statement.

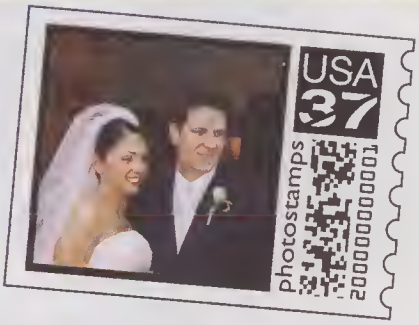
Sharp LL-151-3D

Sony, Sharp, and others formed a consortium last year to hammer out standards for the development of 3D monitors. Hardware and software that accommodates 3D viewing with glasses will work with the monitor. Sharp, among others, is also working with software developers to tweak their applications to make them viewable in 3D. Target markets include gamers, but also industrial customers in life sciences, medical imaging, oil and gas, and design.

The monitor costs $1,499 and is available through Sharp.

—Michael Kanellos, News.com

Put Your Own Stamp on Postage



STAMPS.COM is now letting customers design their own stamps.

With PhotoStamps, people can convert digital photos, designs, and images into valid U.S. postage. The company has recently received authorization from the U.S. Postal Service to market the service for a trial period.

To place orders for customized postage stamps, customers can log on to the company's site, upload a photograph or image, select border colors, and choose a value for the postage. Stamps.com limits the images to certain categories, however, to avoid inappropriate postage. Customers can buy a PhotoStamp with a value of 23 cents to $3.85. A single sheet of 20 37-cent stamps costs $16.99.

"PhotoStamps offer parents, grandparents, pet lovers, travelers, and anyone with a hobby a new way to share their favorite digital photos," Ken McBride, Stamps.com CEO, said in a statement. "From wedding invitations to birth announcements to holiday greeting cards, PhotoStamps are an ideal way for customers to express themselves with their mail. They are also an ideal tool for businesses that are looking for new ways to get their mail noticed or to create a customized identity."

This isn't the first time customers have been allowed to design their own stamps. Two years ago, the Postal Service allowed printing of stamps from personal computers on special watermarked paper using software marketed by Stamps.com. *—Dinesh C. Sharma, News.com*

Time to Lose

Average Time It Takes to Infect Unpatched PCs

2004	2003
20 minutes	40 minutes

Researchers have found that the average time it takes to infect an unpatched Windows PC with malware has been cut in half since last year. The result: A computer can be infected even before its user has time to download patches to protect the system from security threats.

Source: Internet Storm Center

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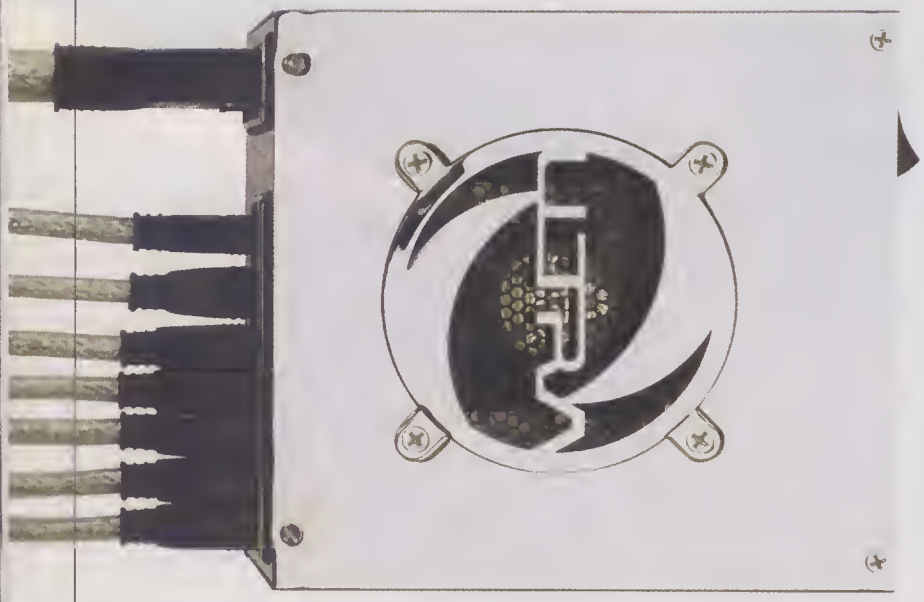
SAMSUNG TFT-LCD

BY BRIAN BENNETT

Watch your way

Stay on track and on time with the **Suunto X9**. New to the Finnish watchmaker's line of wristop computers, the $725 X9 combines GPS, electronic-compass, barometer, thermometer, and altimeter functions into one wearable device. You can also download important waypoints from your PC into the X9's memory, so you'll never get lost. *Suunto, www.suunto.com*



Juice redefined

The **Ultra Products X-Connect 500-Watt ATX Power Supply** pumps up your PC's electrical source in more ways than one. Not only is the $129.99 X-Connect nicely crafted in a high-gloss metallic hue, but the unit also comes with eight modular power cables, allowing you to add cords only as you need them. Even better, the cables glow when exposed to ultraviolet lighting. *Ultra Products, www.ultraproducts.com*

Data defense

It's always a good idea to back up your digital files regularly. Connecting directly to your home network, the $299 **Buffalo LinkStation Network Storage Center** automatically stores important data to its 160GB hard drive. The device can also double as an FTP server to provide data transfers to systems with Internet access. *Buffalo Technology, www.buffalotech.com*

Private screening

With Samsung's tiny new $549.99 **Yepp YH-999**, you'll certainly be the envy of your fellow commuters. Running Microsoft's Portable Media Center OS, the 20GB, 8-ounce YH-999 lets you play WMV movie files, as well as MP3 and WMA digital audio, on the go. *Samsung Electronics America, www.samsungusa.com*

Battlefield acoustics

Featuring a closed ear-cup design, the $99.95 **Altec Lansing AHS602** gaming headset uses integrated SRS Headphone technology to create 3D-audio environments. The headset also has a noise-filtering microphone for chatting under fire. *Altec Lansing, www.altec-lansing.com*

An artful interface

A slim and ergonomic keyboard/mouse combo, the $99.95 **Logitech Cordless Desktop LX 700** offers multimedia controls aplenty. When the LX 700 is used with its bundled MediaLife software, you can wirelessly command the playback of digital music, video, and even Internet radio stations. The keyboard is also built for two-handed navigation, so you won't need to use the mouse while manipulating documents. *Logitech, www.logitech.com*

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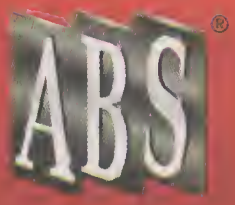

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Extreme Customization Makes Performance PC Worth the Price

Overdrive Torque.OP

EDITORS' CHOICE

A WHOPPING 20 HOURS: That's how long it took to build our $5,199 Overdrive Torque.OP review PC. You wouldn't know it from the simple aesthetics of the aluminum Lian-Li case, but one look at the tidy interior tells the story. This machine's all about fine details—that, and the fastest application performance of any AMD system we've tested.

Up front you'll find a DVD/CD-RW combo drive, a 12x DVD±RW drive, and two removable 10,000rpm 74GB hard drives in a RAID Level 0 array. An internal 250GB hard drive is included as well.

Also in front are two USB 2.0 ports, a floppy drive/memory-card reader, and two unoccupied external 3.5-inch bays. On back are four more USB 2.0 connectors and three FireWire ports. Internal expansion is limited to three PCI slots and three 3.5-inch bays.

Expert touches abound with this machine. All the screws are stainless steel and fitted with rubber washers. Rounded cables are neatly secured and routed out of the way. Thin sheets of rubber line the inside for sound dampening. The motherboard sits on a sheet of rubber as well, allowing it to flex if you put pressure on it. Overdrive even clipped a miniature flashlight inside the case.

This PC's distinctiveness extends to the components. To get more power for less money, Overdrive used AMD's 64-bit, 2.4GHz Opteron 150 processor, a chip usually found in servers and workstations. Overdrive's Hyperclocking raises the processor's clock speed to perform as fast as—or faster than—AMD's high-end FX-53.

Overdrive uses custom registered-memory modules that perform on par with nonregistered memory. This brings us to one downside: All the RAM slots are filled, and if you ever want more than 1GB, you'd have to replace all four modules at once.

Not surprisingly, the Torque.OP was an incredible performer. Its BAPCo SYSmark 2004 score of 220 was the best we've seen from an AMD-based system. And a 256MB ATI Radeon X800 Pro graphics card helped the PC fly through our high-resolution (1,600x1,200) Unreal Tournament 2003 test at a fluid 105 frames per second, though we did expect a little more, considering the card was overclocked.

Gaming was still spectacular and immersive, even on the most demanding titles, and sharing credit for this are a 21-inch NEC AccuSync CRT, Creative Labs' Sound Blaster Audigy 2 ZS Platinum Pro card, and Klipsch's ProMedia Ultra 5.1 speakers. Components like these also make the Torque.OP a potent workstation for digital media creation.

The SureCool cooling system kept everything from overheating, and, with six fans whirring, the tower still ran nearly silently.

A one-year parts-and-labor warranty includes toll-free tech support, available weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (ET).

—*Joshua Goldman*

For a component-packed PC, the Overdrive Torque.OP has a tidy interior.

EDITORS' RATING 8.4

0 BETTER >> 10

PROS Expertly assembled; quiet; strong performance

CONS Custom registered RAM complicates memory upgrades; limited expansion

SPECS 2.4GHz Opteron 150; 1GB DDR; two 74GB SATA hard drives; 250GB SATA hard drive; DVD±RW; DVD/CD-RW combo; 21-inch NEC CRT; ATI Radeon X800 Pro graphics (256MB); Windows XP Professional

Overdrive PC, 866-410-9958
www.overdrivepc.com

DIRECT PRICE $5,199

The Great Communicator

T-Mobile Sidekick II

T-MOBILE'S $299 SIDEKICK II offers some refinements over the first Sidekick, but it still lacks some high-end features and can't access corporate e-mail.

The device is a bit longer and heavier this time around, but it's slimmer. The 2.75-inch-diagonal, 65,000-color screen, which rotates 180 degrees to reveal a keyboard, no longer bulges out from the rest of the phone and feels much more natural when held against your cheek during a conversation. The backlit keypad is roomy, tactile, and easy to use.

The phone stores 2,000 contacts, with room for five numbers each. Other goodies include a notepad, a calendar, a to-do list, 12 polyphonic ring tones, USB support, and a vibrate mode. You can keep in contact without making a call in a variety of ways: text messaging; intuitive and speedy (for a cell phone) Web surfing; wireless e-mail access to three POP3/IMAP accounts; and support for viewing DOC, PDF, and JPEG files. For downloaded apps, the phone offers 32MB of shared memory, though downloads are limited to a total of 1MB. The integrated VGA camera has a built-in flash for quick night shots. What's more, the Sidekick II is a world phone, so you can keep in touch internationally. Noticeably lacking, however, are Bluetooth and infrared connectivity. T-Mobile plans to offer the ability to sync with Outlook soon.

We tested the triband (GSM 900/1800/1900) Sidekick II in New York City and were pleased with the results. Web pages loaded quickly, at about dial-up speed. The battery held out for 5 hours of talk time, but standby time was an unimpressive 3 days.

—*Ben Patterson*

EDITORS' RATING 8.0

0 BETTER >> 10

PROS Built-in camera with flash; speakerphone; great keyboard; convenient e-mail, IM functionality; speedy Web browsing; world phone

CONS Bulky; no corporate e-mail access; no Bluetooth, infrared ports

T-Mobile USA, 877-387-4324
www.t-mobile.com

Direct Price $299

The Sidekick II's color screen swivels for quick keyboard access.

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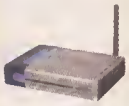

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HP Media Center m1050y Photosmart PC

Fine features throughout for this entertainment desktop

WITH A CLASSY-LOOKING CASE, cool features inside and out, and Microsoft's Media Center OS adding the right multimedia software touches, the HP Media Center m1050y Photosmart PC is proof Media Center PCs are improving. But you pay the price for all this functionality—in this case, $2,569, not including a monitor.

EDITORS' RATING 7.9

0 BETTER >> 10

PROS Lots of cool design touches; removable HP Personal Media Drive; strong overall performance

CONS Expensive; cluttered interior; no expansion room

SPECS 3.6GHz Pentium 4 560; 1GB DDR; 160GB removable hard drive; 250GB hard drive; DVD+RW; OVO; no monitor; ATI Radeon X600 graphics (256MB); Windows XP Media Center Edition; Microsoft Office 2003

Hewlett-Packard, 888-999-4747
www.hp.com

Direct Price $2,569

Among the m1050y's many useful features is the revolutionary Personal Media Drive (PMD), a 160GB hard drive that works externally (connecting via included USB cable) or internally using a specially designed slot up front. It's hot-swappable, too—we docked and removed it repeatedly without incident—so it's an easy way to back up your files or take them with you. The PC also has a second, internal 250GB drive.

Our review system had a high-powered 3.6GHz Pentium 4 560 processor and 915G chipset, ATI's 256MB Radeon X600 PCI Express (PCIe) graphics card, and 1GB of fast 400MHz SDRAM. Application performance was stellar: a 210 on BAPCo SYSmark 2004. Hard-core gamers will want a more powerful graphics card, but its 17.3 frames per second on our high-resolution (1,600x1,200) Unreal Tournament 2003 test is adequate for multimedia purposes.

Other great components include a multiformat flash-card reader, plus 8x DVD+RW and 16x DVD-ROM drives. The case is loaded with front and back ports and connectors, as well as a recessed dock to fit certain HP digital cameras. The interior is littered with cables, however, and components are difficult to reach. The side panel is a bear to get back on, and our review unit had no free bays or slots.

A standard one-year parts-and-labor warranty includes 24/7 toll-free tech support. —*Asa Somers*

Dell Dimension XPS Gen-3

Performance PC gives gamers lots to cheer about

SOMETHING OLD, new, borrowed, and blue: Dell took its Dimension 8400, added extra high-end hardware, incorporated front-panel lighting you'd find on popular third-party cases, and made the whole thing, except for its polished-silver faceplate, blue—very blue. The $3,899 result is the Dell Dimension XPS Gen-3.

EDITORS' RATING 7.9

0 BETTER >> 10

PROS Fast; 20.1-inch LCD; double-layer DVD+RW drive; front-panel lights

CONS Marginal speakers considering price

SPECS 3.6GHz Pentium 4 560; 1GB DDR2; two 160GB hard drives (RAID 0); DVD+RW (double-layer); CD-RW; 20.1-inch Dell LCD; ATI Radeon XB00 XT graphics (256MB); Windows XP Professional

Dell, 800-274-3355
www.dell.com

Direct Price $3,899

The performance-minded will love the XPS Gen-3's components: a 3.6GHz Pentium 4 560 processor, 1GB of DDR2 SDRAM, a 256MB ATI Radeon X800 XT PCI Express (PCIe) graphics card, and dual 160GB hard drives arranged in a Serial ATA (SATA) RAID Level 0 array. The PC excelled on our application-performance tests, scoring a dazzling 215 on BAPCo SYSmark 2004. Graphics performance was equally impressive: 114 frames per second on our 1,600x1,200-resolution Unreal Tournament 2003 test.

With two optical drives—a 48x CD-RW and a double-layer 16x DVD+RW—and a 20.1-inch Dell 2001FP LCD with a 16-millisecond response time, 600-to-1 contrast ratio, 85-degree horizontal and vertical viewing angles, and digital and analog inputs, you'll be ready for anything, be it video, music, gaming, or office work. The only disappointment is Dell's 5650 six-piece speakers; they sound good until you crank them up.

The tool-free case ditches Dell's long-used charcoal gray for the eye-catching blue. The front can be backlit with your choice of seven colors selectable in the BIOS. Internal expansion is limited to two memory slots, two PCI slots, and some SATA and IDE ports.

One year of parts-and-labor coverage is included, along with onsite service and 24/7 toll-free tech support. —*Bill O'Brien*

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Monarch Sempron 3100+ System Special

New CPU debuts in well-configured budget PC

QUIET AND SMALL, Monarch's $1,299 Sempron 3100+ System Special is a competent workhorse whose price won't trample a home or small-business user's budget.

AMD's Sempron processor replaces the budget Duron line. The Monarch PC provides a 1.8GHz Sempron 3100+ and 512MB of memory. The excellent Asus K8V-SE Deluxe motherboard will easily allow you to upgrade to another AMD Socket 754 processor, including an Athlon 64.

The tool-free case—with front-panel FireWire, audio-in and -out, and USB 2.0 ports—holds a 120GB Serial ATA hard drive, a multiformat media-card reader, and an 8x DVD-RW drive. You'll even get a 128MB ATI Radeon 9600 SE graphics card. And surprisingly, there's still room for expansion.

Capable of handling office chores, surfing, e-mail, and basic multimedia without choking, the Sempron 3100+ scored a decent 138 on our BAPCo SYSmark 2004 application-performance test. Its 56.2-frame-per-second mark on our low-end Unreal Tournament 2003 test rules out the latest 3D games, however.

The 17-inch CTX S701BA LCD delivered an excellent picture, and the Logitech X-220 three-piece speakers produced ear-pleasing, if not wall-rattling, sound. The integrated audio supports 7.1 channels, so an upgrade to at least a 5.1 speaker set would be worthwhile.

Monarch provides 24-hour toll-free support and a three-year onsite parts-and-labor warranty through a third party. This PC is a great choice for computing on the cheap. —*Bill O'Brien*

EDITORS' RATING 8.0

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS 128MB graphics card; upgrade path to Athlon 64; 17-inch LCD; generous warranty

CONS Included speakers don't take full advantage of audio abilities

SPECS 1.8GHz Sempron 3100+; 512MB DDR; 120GB hard drive; DVD-RW; 17-inch CTX LCD; ATI Radeon 9600 SE graphics (128MB); Windows XP Home Edition

Monarch Computer Systems, 800-611-0875
www.monarchcomputer.com

Direct Price $1,299

Sony VAIO VGC-RA710G

Centralize your media in style

EDITORS' RATING 7.7

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Fashionable design; above-average multimedia software; lots of storage space

CONS Cheap plastic doors on front panel; older AGP card

SPECS 3.2GHz Pentium 4 540; 512MB DDR; 250GB hard drive; dual-layer DVD±RW; DVD; 20.1-inch Sony LCD; nVidia GeForce FX 5200 graphics (128MB); Windows XP Media Center Edition 2004; Microsoft Works 7.0

Sony Electronics, 877-865-7669
www.sonystyle.com

Direct Price $2,799

AT $1,699, the Sony VAIO VGC-RA710G is a decent midrange buy despite its aging graphics card. Note, though, that Sony shipped our review unit with its beautiful but costly 20.1-inch StylePro SDM-S204 flat-panel LCD, vaulting the total price to $2,799.

Still, Microsoft's Windows XP Media Center OS and a wealth of multimedia software titles make this a great entertainment center. The case's cooling system lends an appealing look and quiet operation. The front-panel covers look flimsy, however.

The VAIO VGC-RA710G scored an adequate 174 on BAPCo SYSmark 2004 and 62.5 frames per second on our low-res Unreal Tournament 2003 test, making it fine for all but high-end apps and gaming.

The desktop carries a one-year parts-and-labor warranty and includes 24/7, toll-free tech support. —*Joshua Goldman*

Dell OptiPlex GX280

Tackle office tasks with ease

IF YOU'RE LOOKING for an office PC, the staid $1,623 Dell OptiPlex GX280 delivers. The case is tough to open, but the high-end configuration will serve you well.

The 3.2GHz Pentium 4 540 CPU is backed by Intel's 915G Express chipset and a Serial ATA hard drive. This robust configuration turned in an outstanding 186 on BAPCo SYSmark 2004. The graphics card isn't up to gaming, but it managed a respectable 57.2 frames per second on our low-end Unreal Tournament 2003 test.

Expansion room consists of three PCI, one x1 PCI Express, and two memory slots, plus one 5.25-inch and three 3.5-inch bays. The PC has two front and six back USB ports.

A generous three-year parts-and-labor warranty includes toll-free support. —*Asa Somers*

EDITORS' RATING 7.9

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Outstanding performance; obsolescence-proof hardware; plenty of expansion room

CONS Clamshell case hard to open

SPECS 3.2GHz Pentium 4 540; 512MB DDR2; 160GB hard drive; DVD/CD-RW combo; 17-inch Dell LCD; ATI Radeon X300 SE graphics (64MB); Windows XP Professional

Dell, 800-274-3355
www.dell.com

Direct Price $1,623

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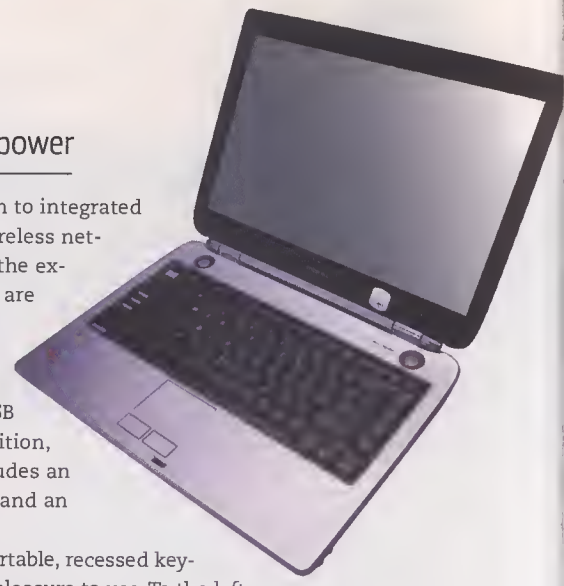
*Among digital cameras with a built-in 8X or greater optical zoom, as of May 2004

www.ph.konicaminolta.us

Toshiba Satellite M35-S456

Thin-and-light's a bit pricey, but packs plenty of computing power



ALL THE BELLS and whistles in Toshiba's $1,899 Satellite M35-S456 ring true. This well-designed notebook not only performs well, but it also has all the features you'd want in a thin-and-light notebook.

EDITORS' RATING 7.8

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Big, bright screen; multiformat DVD; strong performance, battery life

CONS Expensive

SPECS 1.7GHz Pentium M; 512MB DDR; 80GB hard drive; DVD±RW/DVD-RAM; 15.4-inch TFT; Windows XP Home Edition

Toshiba America,
800-867-4422
www.toshiba.com

Direct Price $1,899

The 6.3-pound (with AC adapter) Centrino notebook came to us with a 1.7GHz Pentium M processor, 512MB of RAM, and an 80GB hard drive. nVidia's GeForce FX Go5200 chip powered the unit's 15.4-inch wide-screen display, which was enhanced by Toshiba's TruBrite technology. You also get a multiformat DVD burner. On the front edge are handy controls for media play, including a volume control and a power switch for the Wi-Fi antenna.

The Satellite's BAPCo MobileMark 2002 score of 186 proved the sum of these parts adds up to good, if not great, performance, compared with similarly configured units. Battery life was also solid at 3 hours and 42 minutes.

In addition to integrated 802.11b/g wireless networking, all the expected ports are here, including one FireWire and three USB ports. In addition, Toshiba includes an SD-card slot and an S-Video port.

The comfortable, recessed keyboard was a pleasure to use. To the left are three buttons that launch the included Express Media player and let you toggle between internal and external display sources.

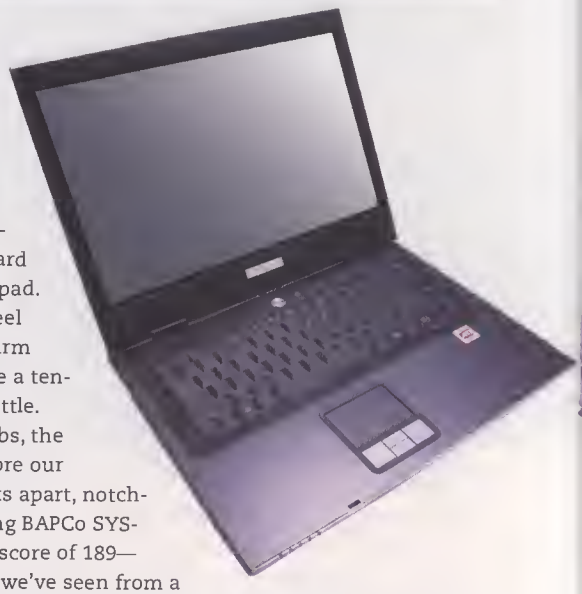
Toshiba includes an industry-standard one-year warranty on parts and labor. Plus, the company's Web site offers a wealth of helpful information.

Although it's a tad expensive, with solid performance and battery life, plus a big, beautiful display, this Satellite is a great choice if you're looking for a full-featured thin-and-light.

—William Flanagan

Polywell PolyNote 3015AW

This svelte traveler is truly a portable desktop



IT MAY BE EXPENSIVE, but with a sleekness that belies its impressive computing power, Polywell's $2,499 PolyNote 3015AW packs a great list of premium components.

The first portable we've reviewed with Intel's advanced 2GHz Pentium M processor, the decently portable PolyNote also features a hefty 1GB of DDR RAM and a nimble 60GB hard drive, which spins at a speedy 7,200rpm. The goodie bag doesn't end there. For optical storage, the laptop is outfitted with a modular DVD-RW drive for minting your own DVDs and CDs. Powering the laptop's sharp, 15.4-inch wide-screen display is a robust ATI Mobility Radeon 9700 3D-graphics subsystem, which has its own 64MB of graphics RAM and ensures you'll be able to play at least moderately demanding PC games.

EDITORS' RATING 8.0

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Blazing speed; 15.4-inch TFT; 802.11b/g Wi-Fi; DVD burner

CONS Pricey

SPECS 2GHz Pentium M; 1GB DDR; 60GB hard drive; DVD-RW; 15.4-inch TFT; Windows XP Professional

Polywell Computers,
800-999-1278
www.polywell.com

Direct Price $2,499

Even with a DVD-RW burner, the attractive 5.5-pound PolyNote measures a trim 1.3x13.9x10.7 inches.

Below its screen sits an average-size keyboard and touch pad. The keys feel deep and firm but do have a tendency to rattle.

In our labs, the PolyNote tore our benchmarks apart, notching a blazing BAPCo SYSmark 2004 score of 189—the fastest we've seen from a laptop to date. The notebook's mark of 40 frames per second on Unreal Tournament 2004 is also swift.

Along with standard port options, the PolyNote features one FireWire port, an S-Video connector, and four USB 2.0 ports. You also get internal 802.11b/g Wi-Fi networking. Polywell backs the laptop with a one-year warranty that includes parts and labor, but you can upgrade to three years of coverage for $150 more.

—Brian Bennett

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SONY

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Compact Design

TR Series

PCG-TR5AP
- Intel® Centrino™ Mobile Technology
  - Intel® Pentium® M Processor Ultra Low Voltage 733 at 1.10GHz[1]
  - Intel® PRO/Wireless Network Connection 802.11b/g[7]
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional
- 40GB[2] Hard Drive, 1GB[2] RAM
- 10.6" Widescreen XBRITE™ LCD Display
- Integrated DVD-RW/CD-RW Drive[4]
- 1-Year Limited Warranty[3]
- **PictureGear Studio™ Software**
- VAIO Media™ Software
- Click to DVD™ Software

$2,999.99 No Interest, No Payments for 6 months.[8]

UPGRADES
- Privacy Screen for $79.99
- Sony VAIO® Large-Capacity Lithium Ion Battery[6] for $349.99

Elegant Mobility

S Series

VGN-S150
- Intel® Centrino™ Mobile Technology
  - Intel® Pentium® M Processor Ultra Low Voltage 725 at 1.60GHz[1]
  - Intel® PRO/Wireless Network Connection 802.11b/g[7]
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- 60GB[2] Hard Drive, 512MB RAM
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- VAIO Media™ Software

$1,999.99 No Interest, No Payments for 6 months.[8]

UPGRADES
- Sony VAIO® Port Replicator for $199.99
- Sony VAIO® Large-Capacity Battery[6] for $299.99

Limited Supply!

Performance Art

X505 Series

VGN-X505ZP
- Intel® Pentium® M Processor Ultra Low Voltage at 1.10GHz[1]
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- 1-Year Limited Warranty[3]
- **PictureGear Studio™ Software**
- VAIO Media™ Software

$2,999.99 No Interest, No Payments for 6 months.[8]

UPGRADES
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- Add a Portable DVD±RW Drive[4] for $399.99

Home Computing

K Series

PCG-K25
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- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
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- 15.4" WXGA (1280x800) Display with XBRITE™ LCD Technology
- Integrated DVD±RW/CD-RW Drive[4]
- 1-Year Limited Warranty[3]
- **PictureGear Studio™ Software**
- VAIO Media™ Software
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A Series

Build-to-Order VGN-A130
- Intel® Celeron® M Processor 1.40GHz[1] (1MB L2 Cache)
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- 15" SXGA (1400x1050) TFT Display
- Integrated CD-RW/DVD-ROM Combo Drive
- 1-Year Limited Warranty[3]
- **PictureGear Studio™ Software**
- VAIO Media™ Software

$1,399.99 No Interest, No Payments for 6 months.[8]

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- Turn Your VAIO® PC into a TV with an AV Entertainment Docking Station for $350
- Upgrade to a DVD±RW Drive[4] for $190

Desktop Replacement
A Series

Build-to-Order VGN-A170
- Intel® Pentium® M Processor 715 (1.50GHz,[1] 2MB L2 Cache, 400MHz FSB)
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- 60GB[2] Hard Drive, 512MB (256MBx2) RAM
- 17" Widescreen WUXGA (1920x1200) Display with XBRITE™ LCD Technology
- ErgoBright™ Technology with Smart Display Sensor
- Integrated CD-RW/DVD-ROM Combo Drive
- 1-Year Limited Warranty[3]
- **PictureGear Studio™ Software**
- VAIO Media™ Software

$2,029.99 No Interest, No Payments for 6 months.[8]

UPGRADES
- Upgrade to an 80GB[2] Hard Drive for $70
- Upgrade to a DVD±RW Drive[4] for $190
- Turn Your VAIO® PC into a TV with an AV Entertainment Docking Station for $350

Portable Multimedia Entertainment
A Series

Build-to-Order VGN-A170
- Intel® Pentium® M Processor 735 (1.70AGHz,[1] 2MB L2 Cache, 400MHz FSB)
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- 80GB[2] Hard Drive (4200 rpm), 512MB (256MBx2) RAM
- 17" Widescreen WUXGA (1920x1200) Display with XBRITE™ LCD Technology
- DVD±RW/CD-RW Drive[4]
- Integrated Wireless LAN 802.11b/g with Bluetooth® Wireless Technology[7]
- AV Entertainment Dock with Speakers for TV Viewing
- 1-Year Limited Warranty[3]
- **PictureGear Studio™ Software**
- VAIO Media™ Software
- Click to DVD™ Software

$2,739.99 No Interest, No Payments for 6 months.[8]

UPGRADES
- Upgrade to an 80GB[2] Hard Drive (5400 rpm) for $100
- 3-Year On-site Service[15] for $249.99

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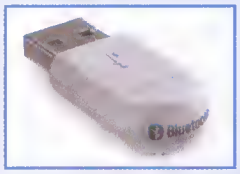
Stay connected and organized while on the go with Sony® VAIO® notebook PCs and these convenient accessories. Multiple wireless technology support—802.11b/g and Bluetooth®[7]—means that you can exchange more information with more compatible devices in more places, for unmatched freedom.

PCGA-AC19V3 AC Adapter
- Keep a Spare AC Adapter at Your Home or Office

$199.99



PCGA-BA1/A VAIO® USB Bluetooth® Adapter[7]
- Includes BlueSpace™ NE Utility Software and Network Smart Capture™ Software

$99.99

Connect wirelessly to other Bluetooth®-enabled devices such as PDAs, cell phones, keyboards and more.[7] Fewer cables on your desk means more freedom and convenience.

PCGA-BP2EA VAIO® A Series Lithium Ion Battery
- Extend the Battery Life of Your VAIO® A Series Notebook
- Place the Extra Battery in the Hot Swappable Bay

$199.99

PCGA-UFD5 USB External Floppy Disc Drive
- Compact, Lightweight and Portable
- One-Step USB Plug-In Makes Connectivity Easy
- No External Power Necessary

$79.99

intel inside centrino™ MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

FREE SHIPPING ON SELECT MODELS[10]
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shipping options, return policies and other www.sonystyle.com policies. You can review these by clicking on the appropriate links in the Info Center section of the shopping cart section of www.sonystyle.com. For product warranty information, click on the Product Warranty link contained on the applicable product page of www.sonystyle.com. Sony is not responsible for typographical or other errors in this ad. Screen images simulated. Non-metric weights and measures are approximate. 1. GHz denotes microprocessor internal clock speed; other factors may affect application performance. 2. Terabyte means one trillion bytes; GB means one billion bytes when referring to hard drive capacity. Accessible capacity may vary. A portion of hard drive capacity is reserved for recovery partition. 3. Certain restrictions apply. See www.sonystyle.com/powarranty for more information. 4. DVD media/formats are not universally compatible. 5. With supplied battery. 6. Actual battery life may vary upon usage. 7. Requires compatible wireless access point. Some features may require Internet service which may require a fee. Sony cannot guarantee the security of wireless communications. This product has been tested and certified to be interoperable by the Wireless Ethernet Compatibility Alliance and is authorized to carry the Wi-Fi logo. For products with Bluetooth capability.

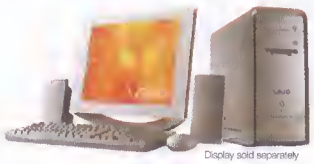
SONY

Sony® VAIO® Desktop PCs with Intel® Processors. Whether you're entertaining a new thought or thinking about your entertainment options, a Sony VAIO® desktop can make life easy. Exclusive preinstalled Sony software lets you enjoy a movie on DVD or even burn your own. Import and organize your digital photos. Store and listen to your favorite music. Or watch TV and even download your favorite programs. Thanks to Sony, showtime is whenever you want it to be.

Sony recommends Microsoft® Windows® XP.

Performance

R Series



Display sold separately

Affordability

RS Series

Build-to-Order VGC-RA910G

- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 530 Supporting Hyper-Threading Technology (3EGHz,[1] 1MB L2 Cache, 800MHz FSB)
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Media Center Edition 2004
- 160GB[2] Serial ATA Hard Drive (7200 rpm)
- DVD+R Double Layer/DVD±RW Drive[4]
- 128MB ATI® RADEON™ X600 XT (PCI Express™ 16x) Graphics Card
- 1-Year Limited Warranty[3]
- **PictureGear Studio™ Software**
- VAIO Media™ Software
- Click to DVD™ Software

$1,558.99 No Interest, No Payments for 6 months.[8]

UPGRADES
- Upgrade up to a 250GB[2] Hard Drive for $106
- 3-Year On-site Service[16] for $299.99

VCG-RA710G

- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 540 with Hyper-Threading Technology (3.20EGHz,[1] 1MB L2 Cache, 800MHz FSB)
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Media Center Edition 2004
- 250GB[2] Parallel ATA Hard Drive (7200 rpm), 512MB DDR at 400MHz
- DVD+R Double Layer/DVD±RW Drive[4]
- 128MB nVIDIA® GeForce™ FX5200 (8X AGP) Graphics Card
- Multimedia Card Reader[15]
- 1-Year Limited Warranty[3]
- **PictureGear Studio™ Software**
- VAIO Media™ Software

$100 MAIL-IN REBATE

~~$1,699.99~~ **$1,599.99** After $100 mail-in rebate. Rebate offer expires October 31, 2004. See www.sonystyle.com for coupon, and complete terms and conditions. No Interest, No Payments for 6 months.[8]

Build-to-Order PCV-RS600C

- Intel® Celeron® Processor 2.60GHz[1]
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- 120GB[2] Hard Drive (7200 rpm)
- DVD-ROM and CD-RW Drives
- 128MB ATI® RADEON™ 9200 Graphics Card
- 1-Year Limited Warranty[3]
- **PictureGear Studio™ Software**
- VAIO Media™ Software

$699.99 No Interest, No Payments for 6 months.[8]

UPGRADES
- Upgrade to a 160GB[2] Hard Drive for $21
- 3-Year On-site Service[16] for $299.99
- Add the SDM-HS73/B 17" Flat Panel Display for ~~$549.99~~ $499.99 After $50 mail-in rebate. Rebate offer expires January 1, 2005. See www.sonystyle.com for coupon, and complete terms and conditions.

PCV-RS620G

- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor with HT Technology 3EGHz[1] (1MB L2 Cache, 800MHz FSB)
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- 160GB[2] Hard Drive (7200 rpm), 512MB DDR at 400MHz
- DVD±RW/CD-RW and DVD-ROM Drives[4]
- 128MB ATI® RADEON™ 9200 Graphics Card
- Convert VHS to DVD with Giga Pocket® Personal Video Recorder
- 1-Year Limited Warranty[3]
- **PictureGear Studio™ Software**
- VAIO Media™ Software
- Click to DVD™ Software

$100 MAIL-IN REBATE

~~$1,199.99~~ **$1,099.99** After $100 mail-in rebate. Rebate offer expires October 31, 2004. See www.sonystyle.com for coupon, and complete terms and conditions. No Interest, No Payments for 6 months.[8]

UPGRADES
- Add the SDM-HS73/B 17" Flat Panel Display for ~~$549.99~~ $499.99 After $50 mail-in rebate. Rebate offer expires January 1, 2005. See www.sonystyle.com for coupon, and complete terms and conditions.

Add these features:

Build-to-Order VGC-RA910G

- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 550 Supporting Hyper-Threading Technology (3.40EGHz,[1] 1MB L2 Cache, 800MHz FSB)
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Media Center Edition 2004
- Creative Inspire® T5400 5.1 Speaker System
- 400GB[2] Serial ATA Hard Drive (7200 rpm)

$2,073.99 No Interest, No Payments for 6 months.[8]

UPGRADES
- Upgrade to 1GB[2] DDR for $106
- 1.6 Terabyte[2] Serial ATA Hard Drive for $1,065
- 3-Year On-site Service[16] for $299.99
- Add the SDM-HS94P/B 19" XBRITE™ Flat Panel Display for ~~$849.99~~ $749.99 After $100 mail-in rebate. Rebate offer expires January 1, 2005. See www.sonystyle.com for coupon, and complete terms and conditions.

Add these features:

VGC-RA810G

- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 550 Supporting Hyper-Threading Technology (3.40EGHz,[1] 1MB L2 Cache, 800MHz FSB)
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Media Center Edition 2004
- 1GB[2] DDR at 400MHz
- High-Definition 5.1 Audio Capability plus Subwoofer
- 128MB ATI® RADEON™ X600 XT (PCI Express™ 16x) Graphics Card
- Click to DVD™ Software—for DVD Creation
- 1-Year Limited Warranty[3]

$2,199.99 No Interest, No Payments for 6 months.[8]

UPGRADES
- Add the SDM-HS94P/B 19" XBRITE™ Flat Panel Display for ~~$849.99~~ $749.99 After $100 mail-in rebate. Rebate offer expires January 1, 2005. See www.sonystyle.com for coupon, and complete terms and conditions.

Add these features:

Build-to-Order PCV-RS600CG

- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor with HT Technology 3GHz[1] (1MB L2 Cache)
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- 250GB[2] Hard Drive (7200 rpm)
- DVD±RW and DVD-ROM Drives[4]
- Multimedia Card Reader[15]
- Convert VHS to DVD with Giga Pocket® Personal Video Recorder

$1,245.99 No Interest, No Payments for 6 months.[8]

UPGRADES
- Upgrade to 1GB[2] DDR for $106
- 3-Year On-site Service[16] for $299.99
- Add the SDM-HS74P/B 17" XBRITE™ Flat Panel Display for ~~$599.99~~ $549.99 After $50 mail-in rebate. Rebate offer expires January 1, 2005. See www.sonystyle.com for coupon, and complete terms and conditions.

Add these features:

PCV-RS630G

- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor with HT Technology at 3.20EGHz[1] (1MB L2 Cache)
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- 250GB[2] Hard Drive

$100 MAIL-IN REBATE

~~$1,349.99~~ **$1,249.99** After $100 mail-in rebate. Rebate offer expires October 31, 2004. See www.sonystyle.com for coupon, and complete terms and conditions. No Interest, No Payments for 6 months.[8]

UPGRADES
- Add the SDM-HS74P/B 17" XBRITE™ Flat Panel Display for ~~$599.99~~ $549.99 After $50 mail-in rebate. Rebate offer expires January 1, 2005. See www.sonystyle.com for coupon, and complete terms and conditions.

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use of a Bluetooth-enabled device may vary as not all Bluetooth devices are compatible. If used with a Bluetooth-enabled mobile phone, ISP service fees apply. 8. On your Sony Financial Services Card, subject to credit approval. A minimum purchase of $299.99 is required. This is a same-as-cash promotion. If balance on these purchases is paid in full before the expiration of the promotional period indicated on your billing statement and your Account is kept current, accrued Finance Charges will not be imposed on these purchases. If balance on these purchases is not paid in full, Finance Charges will be assessed from the purchase date at the Standard Rate APR of 21.99%. For Accounts not kept current, the Default Rate of 24.99% APR will be applied to all balances on your Account. Minimum monthly payments are required. The minimum monthly payment presented is based on the product and purchase price shown. The minimum monthly payment is 2.5% of the "New Balance" or $10, whichever is greater. The number of months you will pay and the amount of your total minimum monthly payment will depend on additional purchases and your Account balances. Minimum Finance Charge $2.00. Certain rules apply to the allocation of payments and Finance Charges on your promotional purchase if you make more than one purchase on your Sony Card. Call 1-888-367-4310 or review your cardholder agreement for information. 9. Memory Stick PRO and Memory Stick PRO Duo media features vary and are dependent on the host hardware. 10. Standard ground shipping within the continental United States with purchase of

VAIO

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V Series

PCV-V300G
- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.80GHz[1]
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- DVD+RW/CD-RW Drive[4]
- 15" XBRITE™ LCD Display
- Wireless Keyboard, Wireless Mouse and Remote Control
- Convert VHS to DVD with Giga Pocket® Personal Video Recorder
- FREE Wireless-b LAN PC Card[7] When Purchased from www.sonystyle.com. While Supplies Last.[13]
- 1-Year Limited Warranty[3]
- **PictureGear Studio™ Software**
- VAIO Media™ Software
- Click to DVD™ Software

$1,699.99 No Interest, No Payments for 6 months.[8]

All-in-One
W Series

PCV-W700G
- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.80GHz[1]
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- DVD±RW/CD-RW Drive[4]
- Built-In 17.5" Widescreen LCD Display
- Convert VHS to DVD with Giga Pocket® Personal Video Recorder
- 802.11a/b/g[7]-Compatible Wireless LAN PC Card
- 1-Year Limited Warranty[3]
- **PictureGear Studio™ Software**
- VAIO Media™ Software
- Click to DVD™ Software

$1,899.99 No Interest, No Payments for 6 months.[8]

Flat Panel LCD Display

SDM-S204/B
- 20.1" UXGA (1600x1200) High-Resolution LCD Panel
- Super-Thin Bezel Design
- ErgoBright™ Technology for Optimal Image Performance
- Digital and Analog Inputs

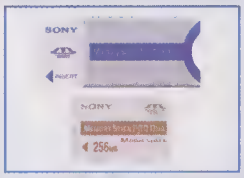
$100 MAIL-IN REBATE[14]

~~$1,099.99~~
$999.99 After $100 mail-in rebate. Rebate offer expires January 1, 2005. See www.sonystyle.com for coupon and complete terms and conditions.

No Interest, No Payments for 6 months.[8]

All Together Now

Capture what inspires you with Cyber-shot® digital still cameras and Handycam® camcorders, and instantly see the results on your Sony VAIO® computer. And with Memory Stick® media, sharing is simple. Sony even makes it easy to show friends and family your latest creations at www.imagestation.com, the best place to create and share digital photos and video on the Web.



MSX-M256A Memory Stick PRO Duo™ Media[9]
- 256MB of Storage (220MB Usable)
- Compatible with Standard-Size Memory Stick® Media Using Included Adapter
- Includes MagicGate™ Copyright Protection Technology

$94.99

Sony Memory Stick PRO Duo™ media is designed to easily store, transfer and share photos, music, presentations and more. Ideal for use in small digital devices.

DSC-100/R Cyber-shot® Digital Camera
- 1/1.8" 7.2 Megapixel Super HAD™ CCD Imager
- 3X Optical/2X Digital Zoom with 0–14.0X Smart Zoom™ Feature (at VGA Resolution)
- Professional-Quality Carl Zeiss® Vario-Tessar® Lens
- 1.8" High-Resolution LCD Monitor

$499.95 No Interest, No Payments for 6 Months.[8]

Extraordinary image quality, speed and stamina in a slim, stylish compact design. Also available in blue.

DCR-DVD201 DVD Handycam® Camcorder
- 1.0 Megapixel Advanced HAD™ CCD Imager
- Professional-Quality Carl Zeiss® Vario-Tessar® Lens
- 2.5" Hybrid SwivelScreen™ LCD Display

$999.99 No Interest, No Payments for 6 Months.[8]

Experience the ultimate in convenience. Record directly onto 3-inch DVD-R and DVD-RW.[4]

ImageStation.com®

- Share your photos via online albums and e-cards.
- FREE to join. Start today and receive a FREE 11-ounce ceramic coffee mug, customized with your photo—no purchase necessary.[11]
- Get beautiful, high-quality photo prints.
- Make unique, fun photo gifts.

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FREE SHIPPING ON SELECT MODELS[10]
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NO INTEREST, NO PAYMENTS FOR 6 MONTHS[8]
ON ALL PURCHASES OVER $299.99

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Sony recommends Microsoft® Windows® XP.

sony style

Sony® VAIO® R Series Desktop PC with an Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor with HT Technology. Video-editing and music-mastering performance doesn't get any better than this. With expandability up to 1.6 terabytes[2] of storage, and innovative design to keep your system running cool and quiet, you'll have the quality and muscle you need for the results you want. Together with VAIO® Creation Suite PLUS software, it's the optimum combination of innovative Sony technologies.

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- Customize any Sony VAIO® PC configuration to meet your specific needs, with the help of a Sony computer expert.
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- From computers to digital camcorders to home entertainment systems and everything in between, Sony Style® Online is the best place to find your favorite Sony products.

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- Sony VAIO® PCs are as easy to purchase as they are to own, with easy financing and extended service options designed to meet your needs—including Accidental Damage Coverage.[16]

ImageStation.com®

- Imagine a Web site where you can share photos via online albums and e-cards, get high-quality prints and make unique photo gifts.
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CLICK sony.com/pc18

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Fujitsu LifeBook N5010

Slow performance offsets a robust CPU and a big screen

THE $2,079 FUJITSU LifeBook N5010 comes equipped with some sophisticated features, such as a large 16.1-inch display and a unique volume wheel. Our test unit also came with a DVD burner and built-in Wi-Fi. But the LifeBook's components prove too modest to make this desktop replacement a performance competitor.

EDITORS' RATING 6.6

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Big 16.1-inch screen; Wi-Fi networking; DVD burner

CONS Slow performance; big, heavy

SPECS 3.2GHz Pentium 4; 512MB DDR; 60GB hard drive; DVD-RW; 16.1-inch TFT; Windows XP Home Edition; Microsoft Works

Fujitsu Computer Systems, 877-372-3473
www.fujitsupc.com

Direct Price $2,079

At 1.7x14x11.9 inches and 10.4 pounds, the LifeBook is achingly large and heavy, but the keyboard still feels cramped. The standard touch pad, two mouse buttons, and scroll button offer lots of room, however.

The fast processor and RAM were not enough to compensate for a slow hard drive and modest graphics chip. The notebook's BAPCo SYSmark 2004 application-performance score of 125 and Unreal Tournament 2004 score of 35.5 frames per second were disappointing, even compared with less-expensive desktop replacements.

The LifeBook offers a good selection of connections, including one FireWire and four USB 2.0 ports, a shared Memory Stick/SD slot, and 802.11a/b/g wireless networking. Fujitsu backs the laptop with a standard one-year warranty that includes parts coverage plus around-the-clock, toll-free phone support.

—Stephanie Bruzzese

Dell Inspiron 700m

Swift and svelte, but humbled by its battery

DELL'S well-designed Inspiron 700m thin-and-light delivers the speed to mix business and pleasure.

Our $1,866 test unit came with a handy DVD+RW drive and a vivid, wide-aspect 12.1-inch TFT with a sharp 1,280x800 native resolution. Dell delivers 802.11b/g Wi-Fi and all the right connections, plus a pair of USB 2.0 ports and an SD flash-card slot. Typing is a chore on its small keys, however.

EDITORS' RATING 8.1

0 BETTER ›› 10

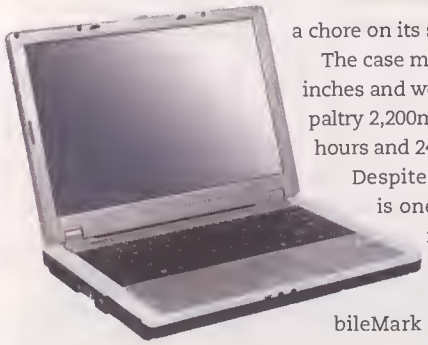
PROS Portable; beautiful design; eye-catching wide-screen

CONS Short battery life; cramped keyboard

SPECS 1.8GHz Pentium M 745; 512MB DDR; 60GB hard drive; DVD+RW; 12.1-inch TFT; Windows XP Home Edition

Dell, 877-883-3355
www.dell.com

Direct Price $1,866



The case measures 1.5x11.7x8.5 inches and weighs 4.1 pounds. Its paltry 2,200mAh cell lasted only 2 hours and 24 minutes in our tests.

Despite its flaws, the Inspiron is one of the best-performing notebooks we've tested, scoring a fast 211 on our BAPCo MobileMark 2002 test. *—Brian Nadel*

Acer Aspire 1712

Enjoy all the power of your desktop wherever you go

YOU CAN THINK of Acer's $1,999 Aspire 1712 as a laptop that acts like a premium performance desktop.

At 14.7 pounds, the Aspire is a behemoth. With the massive AC adapter, the notebook's travel weight swells to almost 17 pounds. With its vast 120GB hard drive, full-size keyboard with separate number pad, and ample 17-inch wide-screen display, the Aspire feels much like a genuine desktop.

EDITORS' RATING 7.8

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Excellent performance; 17-inch screen; full-size keyboard

CONS Large, heavy

SPECS 3GHz Pentium 4; 1GB DDR; 120GB hard drive; DVD±RW; 17-inch TFT; Windows XP Professional

Acer, 800-733-2237
www.acer.com

Mfr. Est. Price $1,999

Scoring a swift BAPCo SYSmark 2004 score of 150 and an excellent 38.9 frames per second on our Unreal Tournament 2004 3D test, the Aspire is also a portable powerhouse.

The Aspire offers standard connections, plus one S-Video and four USB 2.0 ports. 802.11b/g wireless networking is integrated. A one-year warranty comes standard.

—Xiao Ming Wu

Memorex True8X Dual +/- Format DVD Recorder

Enormous external drive provides solid value

IF WE DIDN'T KNOW BETTER, we'd insist the "M" atop the $169.99 Memorex True8X Dual +/- Format DVD Recorder stood for "massive." At 2.5x7.5x10.3 inches (HWD), the True8X is one giant external drive.

It isn't unattractive, though, clad in silver with black accents. The drive features two FireWire ports and a USB 2.0 port; USB and FireWire cables are included, as is one DVD+R disc.

EDITORS' RATING 7.3

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Attractive design; comprehensive installation guide

CONS Bulky; doesn't support dual-layer technology

Memorex, 877-474-8548
www.memorex.com

Mfr. Est. Price $169.99

The True8X isn't the fastest burner around, writing to DVD±R media at 8x and DVD±RW at 4x. It also doesn't offer recently introduced dual-layer technology. The True8X ripped a 4.4GB movie in just under 16 minutes and burned it to plus and minus media in 9 minutes and 26 seconds and 9 minutes and 37 seconds, respectively—on a par with other 8x drives we've tested. CD-burning speeds are rated at 32x for writing and 16x for rewriting; with 753MB of audio data, it took 6 minutes and 35 seconds to rip and 3 minutes and 28 seconds to burn, also in line with competing drives.

A 50-page installation guide accompanies a quick-setup sheet. Written in plain English, the guide is chock-full of step-by-step screenshots. Bundled software includes Ahead Software's Nero 6 OEM Suite and Simple Star's PhotoShow Deluxe 2.5 album software. Memorex provides a one-year warranty, and toll-free technical support for the drive is available weekdays from noon to 9 p.m. (ET).

If you're looking for an external DVD burner, the bulky but novice-friendly True8X is a solid deal.

—Nancy A. Feldman

Logitech Z-2200

Room-rocking bass and crystal-clear sound

LOGITECH'S $149.99 Z-2200 three-piece speaker system could turn even the most acoustically ambivalent into audiophiles. Each of the THX-certified Z-2200's 80-watt satellites includes a 3-inch driver with an aluminum phase plug for cool operation and efficient dispersion of high frequencies. Our only gripe was that the 82-inch speaker cables lacked quick-connect jacks for adding longer cables.

EDITORS' RATING 8.6

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Crisp sound in middle, high ranges; wired remote with headphone jack; affordable

CONS No quick-connect jacks on speaker cables

Logitech, 800-231-7717
www.logitech.com

Direct Price $149.99

The subwoofer, which measures 11x11x15 inches (HWD), has an 8-inch throw driver and a dual-flared port design for maximum bass output. You can connect a wired remote with a headphone jack, as well as an adapter for gaming consoles.

The Z-2200's performance blew us away. When combined with Creative Labs' Sound Blaster Audigy 2 ZS Gamer LE sound card, movies, games, and music emitted room-rocking bass and crisp, even mid- and high-level sounds. Even at top volume, the speakers sounded neither muddy nor distorted.

—John R. Delaney

eVGA.com Personal Cinema e-GeForce FX 5700

Watch and record television on your PC

EVGA.COM'S 128MB PERSONAL CINEMA e-GeForce FX 5700 brings digital-video-recording functionality to your PC, but the $229.99 card has some shortcomings.

A single DVI port means the card can't drive more than one monitor. Also, the radio-frequency base lacks an infrared-blaster port, so you can't use the remote to control a connected set-top cable box.

EDITORS' RATING 7.2

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Comprehensive media software; wide range of A/V inputs/outputs

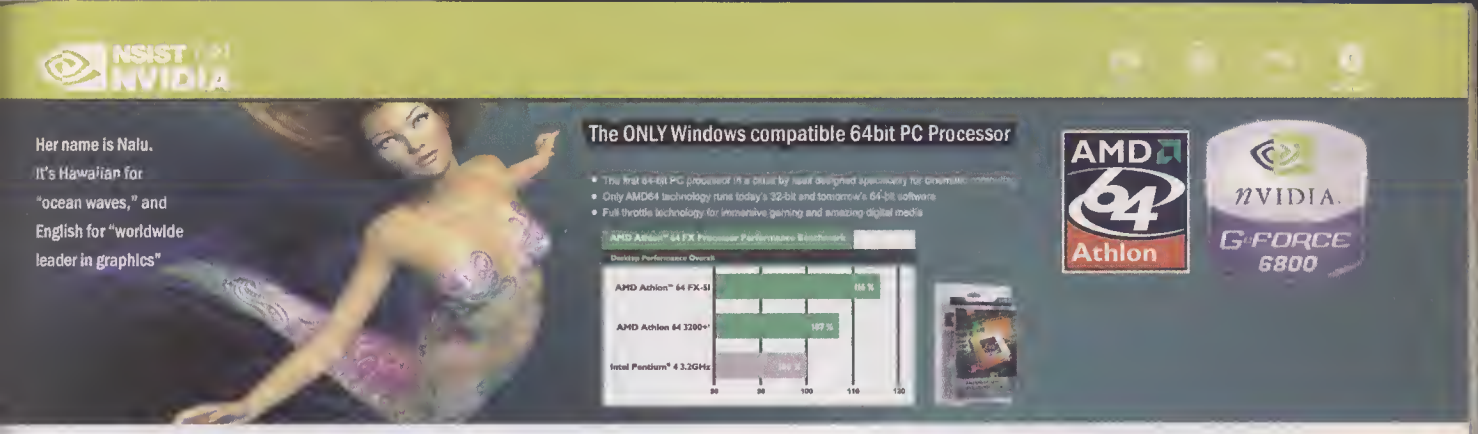
CONS No infrared blaster; supports only a single monitor; can't decode encrypted cable-box signal

eVGA.com, 714-528-4500
www.evga.com

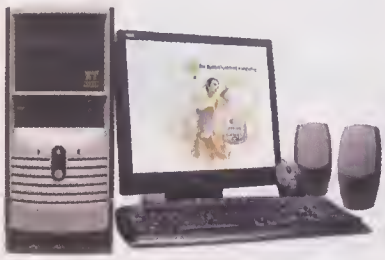
List Price $229.99

The comprehensive software bundle includes the easy-to-use Gemstar Guide Plus+ TV-channel guide, but because the card can't decode an encrypted cable-box signal, the guide and the DVR capabilities become useless unless you're recording an over-the-air broadcast or a decrypted TV signal. You also get a variety of media-playing and -recording apps.

—Ari Vernon



ZT recommends Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional



ZT SOHO PC A5340

AMD Athlon™ 64 Processor 3000+ 1600FSB w/ HyperTransport

Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition

- VIA K8T800 Chipset Mainboard w/SPDIF Out (Support Raid 0, 1)
- 512MB PC3200 Dual Channel DDR400
- Seagate® 120GB Serial ATA/150 7200rpm Hard Drive
- 7 in 1 Flash Media Reader
- 128MB nVIDIA® GeForce™ FX5200 w/TV Out & DVI
- New" 16x DVD±RW & CD-RW Combo Drive
- Realtek ALC655 6-channel Codec Audio
- 10/100/1000 Gigabit LAN
- MID Tower Chassis w/350Watt Power Supply
- Logitech® Internet Keyboard & Optical Wheel Mouse
- 2- piece Stereo Speaker
- Microsoft® Works 7.0
- 3-year Limited Warranty

$799 17" Flat Panel LCD Display (add: $359)

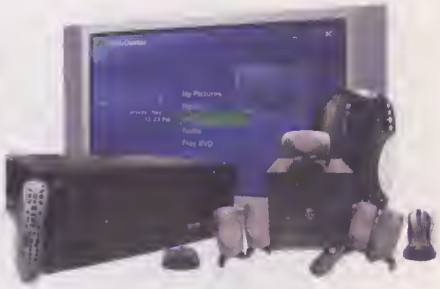
ZT Gaming PC A5341

AMD Athlon™ 64 Processor 3400+ 1600FSB w/ HyperTransport

Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition

- VIA K8T800 Chipset Mainboard w/SPDIF Out (Support Raid 0, 1)
- 1.0GB PC3200 Dual Channel DDR400
- Seagate® 160GB Serial ATA/150 7200rpm Hard Drive
- 256MB nVIDIA® GeForce™ 6800GT w/TV Out & DVI
- New" 16x DVD±RW & CD-RW Combo Drive
- Realtek ALC655 6-channel Codec Audio
- 10/100/1000 Gigabit LAN
- X-MEN Black MID Tower Chassis w/500W Power Supply w/See Through Windows & Neon Light
- Logitech® Internet Keyboard & Optical Wheel Mouse
- Microsoft® Works 7.0
- 3-year Limited Warranty

$1,399 17" Flat Panel LCD Display (add: $359)
Logitech® Z-5300 THX Certified 5.1 6-piece Speakers w/ Subwoofer (add. $149)



ZT Media Center PC A5342

AMD Athlon™ 64 Processor 3200+ 1600FSB w/ HyperTransport

Microsoft® Windows® XP Media Center Edition 2004 w/TV Tuner & Remote Control

- VIA K8T800 Chipset Mainboard w/SPDIF Out (Support Raid 0, 1)
- 512MB PC3200 Dual Channel DDR400
- Seagate® 160GB Serial ATA/150 7200rpm Hard Drive
- 256MB NVIDIA GeForce FX5500 w/TV Out & DVI
- New" 16x DVD±RW & CD-RW Combo Drive
- Realtek ALC655 6-channel Codec Audio
- 10/100/1000 Gigabit LAN
- D.Vine 4 Aluminum Media Center Chassis w/450W Power Supply
- Logitech® Cordless MX Duo Keyboard & Rechargeable Optical Wheel Mouse
- Microsoft® Works 7.0
- 3-year Limited Warranty

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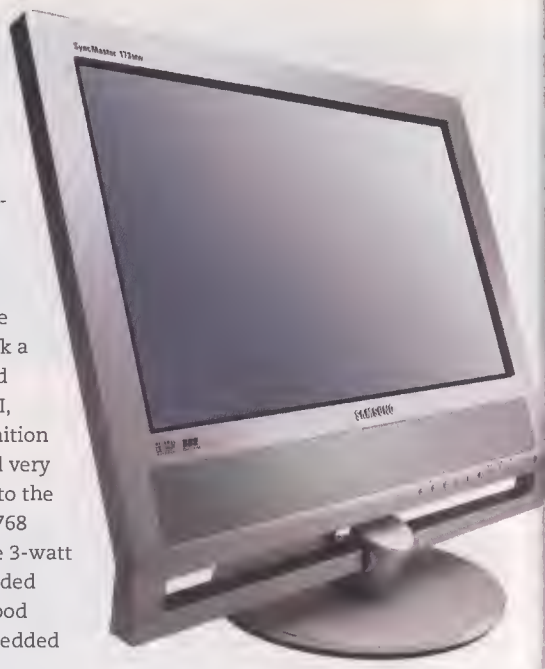
Samsung SyncMaster 173MW

17-inch LCD brings HDTV to your desktop



THE $699 PRICE TAG on Samsung's SyncMaster 173MW may seem a bit steep for a 17-inch LCD, until you factor in its HDTV-ready, built-in TV tuner.

The SyncMaster's base is equipped with a lazy Susan that allows a smooth rotating swivel of 45 degrees to the left or right. The panel also tilts 5 degrees forward and 30 degrees backward, but it offers no height adjustment or screen pivoting. The screen comes with both analog and digital inputs (cables included).

EDITORS' RATING 7.6

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Built-in HDTV tuner; above-average monitor image quality

CONS Mediocre video performance; lacks height adjustment, screen pivoting

Samsung, 800-726-7864
www.samsungusa.com

Mfr. Est. Price $699

With sharp text, deep blacks, and vibrant colors, the SyncMaster proved to be an above-average performer as a computer monitor, though we did note some minor flaws. It also provided one of the more enjoyable LCD gaming experiences to date.

In terms of video performance, however, the display fared worse than many 17-inch TV/monitors we've seen. We noticed either overly harsh edges or softening at every setting of the sharpness control, and the color control didn't seem to work at all. The picture did look a bit sharper and cleaner via DVI, and high-definition sources looked very sharp, thanks to the panel's 1,280x768 resolution. The 3-watt speakers provided surprisingly good sound for embedded speakers.

Samsung backs the flat panel with a three-year warranty package that covers parts, labor, and the backlight. Toll-free support is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

If you're looking for an all-inclusive multimedia display, this SyncMaster may be the ticket—mediocre video quality notwithstanding. *—Tim Patterson and David Katzmaier*

Princeton Senergy 914

Big LCD shines with fine image quality

PRINCETON DIGITAL'S $699.99 Senergy 914 offers good image quality and generous connectivity (one digital and two analog inputs), making this 19-inch LCD monitor a worthwhile deal if you're looking for a decent picture at a reasonable price.

EDITORS' RATING 7.6

0 BETTER ›› 10

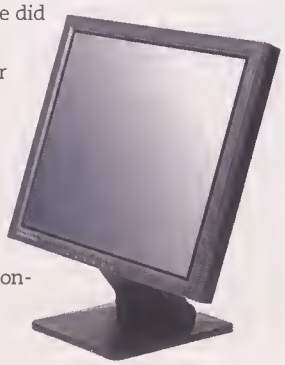
PROS Fine display quality, especially with text

CONS Limited adjustability

Princeton Digital, 888-668-7655
www.princetondigitalusa.com

Mfr. Est. Price $699.99

At a native resolution of 1,280x1,024, text looked sharp and easy to read, largely due to the Senergy's strong contrast ratio. The display showed nice, bright whites, very dark blacks, and a more even range of grays than we usually see from LCDs. It also delivered above-average performance with video—impressively, dark scenes were full of details, though we did see some ghosting and background noise. Note, though, that the monitor is a bit less adjustable than many other 19-inchers we've seen.



Princeton backs the Senergy with a three-year warranty, and toll-free tech support is available weekdays from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. (ET). If you're looking for a decent picture at a reasonable price, this panel should prove a fine fit. *—Kristina Blachere*

Sharp LL-191A

An average flat screen passes the text test

SHARP'S $699 LL-191A comes up short next to 19-inch LCDs that offer more features and better image quality. You might consider it if you do primarily text viewing, but better 19-inch LCDs are available.

In our lab tests, text looked crisp and clear at the LL-191A's 1,280x1,024 native resolution, but the screen didn't handle other tasks as ably. Bright graphics on a dark background suffered from a distracting fuzzy halo. The screen displayed strong, saturated colors but didn't handle gray scales as well, and darker hues were not particularly well-defined.

EDITORS' RATING 6.8

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Crisp, clean text; generous phone support

CONS Middling graphics quality

Sharp Systems of America, 800-237-4277
www.sharpsystems.com

Direct Price $699

Sharp provides around-the-clock, toll-free phone support for the life of the LL-191A and covers it with a three-year warranty that includes prepaid shipping. *—Dan Littman*

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Canon Pixma iP4000 Photo Printer

Fast, quality prints at an inexpensive price

CANON'S PIXMA iP4000 Photo Printer offers decent print quality across the board with fast print speeds, and, best of all, a low $149.99 price.

The Pixma eschews the typical bulging-belly design in favor of a rectangular bread-box look. One feature that's unusual in a low-cost inkjet is the 150-sheet paper drawer that slides in and out of the bottom of the printer. It also has a direct-print port for Canon cameras or any camera that supports the PictBridge direct-print standard, and also provides both USB and parallel ports.

EDITORS' RATING 7.7

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Fast printing; decent print quality; inexpensive; PictBridge-compatible; high paper-input capacity; dual paper trays

CONS Feathering in text files; photos could be smoother

Canon U.S.A., 800-385-2155
usa.canon.com

Direct Price $149.99

This four-color printer lets you replace cartridges individually, which saves money and reduces waste. Inks run $11.95 each for the four standard cartridges and $13.95 for the pigment black.

The Pixma managed a brisk 6.7 pages per minute when printing text and an extremely fast 1.8 minutes per page when printing an 8x10 photo. Text looked nice and dark at arm's length, but close inspection revealed much feathering around the edges of the letters. As for graphics, the Pixma had a tough time handling areas that showed a mix of text and graphical elements. In our test photos, the printer did a good job capturing tricky details such as the illustration on a postage stamp, but we saw slightly more dithering and banding in the background than we'd like.

The Pixma comes with an industry-standard one-year warranty. Toll-free tech support is available weekdays from 8 a.m. to midnight and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. (ET). —*Kristina Blachere*

HP Color LaserJet 2550L

Affordable color laser is a tad slow but gives sharp prints

AT $499.99, the HP Color LaserJet 2550L is a bargain. It may be a bit plodding and offers limited paper capacity, but its output quality is impressive.

The basic-looking unit has the usual cluster of buttons and indicator lights but lacks an LCD, so you'll have to make setting adjustments through the software. What's more, the multipurpose paper tray is limited to 125 sheets; larger trays are optional. Printing costs are typical—about 2 cents per page for black and 2.5 cents for color.

EDITORS' RATING 7.4

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Low price for a color laser; above-average print quality; no-nonsense design, interface

CONS Slow color printing; low-capacity standard paper tray; control panel lacks LCD

Hewlett-Packard, 888-999-4747
www.hp.com

Mfr. Est. Price $499.99

The 2550L proved a quiet, above-average monochrome performer, outputting flawless text at 12.1 pages per minute (ppm) and graphics at 9.8ppm. Color printing was high-quality, but speeds were sluggish at 3.9ppm for text and 3.1ppm for graphics. Regardless, this color laser's affordable price and eye-pleasing output add up to a very good value. —*K.B.*

Dell MFP Laser Printer 1600n

All-in-one with good print, scan capabilities

THE $399 DELL MFP Laser Printer 1600n mixes single-user and small-office capabilities well, but it may not be entirely appropriate for either type of user.

In addition to delivering monochrome laser printing, the 1600n functions as a flatbed scanner, a walk-up copier, and a fax machine. The built-in Ethernet interface is useful, but when the 1600n is deployed over a network, no one can use its faxing or color-scanning capability. Also, most home users won't need Ethernet, and office users probably won't need the walk-up capabilities.

EDITORS' RATING 7.5

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Good print, scan quality; Ethernet interface

CONS Can't fax, scan over a network

Dell, 800-915-3355, www.dell.com

Direct Price $399

The 1600n performed well in our tests, printing graphics, scanning, and copying quickly, while producing nearly the best-quality color scans we've ever seen. Plus, per-page costs are a reasonable 1.6 to 2.3 cents. —*Dan Littman*

SECTION CONTINUES ON PAGE 56

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ZT recommends Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional

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- Integrated Real 256 bit 20/3D Graphic (up to 32MB Share Memory)
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- 2-Piece Stereo Speaker
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- 3-year Limited Warranty

$569 17" Flat Panel LCD Display (add: $359)

ZT PRO Gaming PC X6505

Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 54D with HT Technology (3.2D GHz, 1MB L2 Cache, 800MHz)

- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- Intel® D915GAVL (915G Chipset) Mainboard
- 512MB PC3200 Oual Channel DDR4DD
- Seagate® 160GB Serial ATA/150 7200rpm (BMB Cache) Hard Drive
- (Support RAID D, 1, 0+1 Configuration)
- 7 in 1 Flash Media Reader
- 128MB ATI RADEDN™ X6DDPRD "PCI EXPRESS" w/TV-Dut & DVI
- New" 16x DVD±RW & CD-RW Combo Drive
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- X-MEN MID Tower Chassis w/5DDWatt Power Supply w/ See Through Windows & Neon Light
- Logitech® Internet Keyboard, Optical Wheel Mouse
- Microsoft® Works 7.D
- 3-year Limited Warranty

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ZT PRO Media Center X6506

Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 54D with HT Technology (3.2D GHz, 1MB L2 Cache, 800MHz)

- Microsoft® Windows® XP Media Center Edition 2004 w/ TV Tuner & Remote Control
- Intel® D915P Chipset Mainboard
- 512MB PC3200 Dual Channel DDR4DD
- Seagate® 16DGB Serial ATA/150 7200rpm (BMB Cache) Hard Drive
- 128MB ATI RADEDN™ X6DD XT w/TV-Dut & DVI
- New" 16x DVD±RW & CD-RW Combo Drive
- Integrated 8-channel High Definition Audio & S/PDIF Dut
- Integrated Dual Gigabit 10/1DD/10000 LAN
- 0.Vine 4 Aluminum Media Center Chassis w/450W Power Supply
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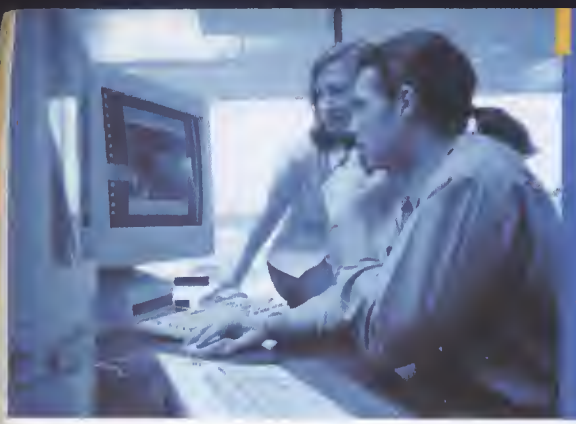

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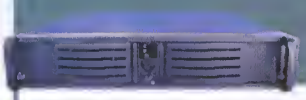
Slot Extension
1 x 64-bit/66MHz Full length PCI-X
Dimensions
H 1.7" x W 16.9" x 0 23"



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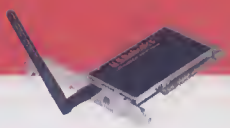

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- Black keyboard
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This new Wintergreen barebone kit features a 52x32x52x CD-RW drive and a wealth of world-class components. Surf the web with the superb 56K v92 modem or connect to a high speed network using the lightning-fast 10/100Mbps Fast Ethernet adapter.

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Wintergreen Systems

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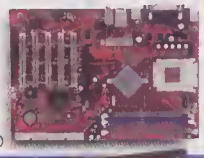
N2PAP Lite Motherboard & Athlon XP 2400+ CPU

mach speed

$115.99*

*After $30 Rebate

#MBM-N2PAP-2400



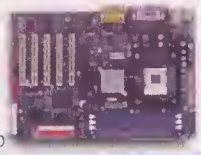
PT800DBP Motherboard & Celeron 2.7GHz CPU

mach speed

$99.99*

*After $30 Rebate

#MBM-PT800-C2700

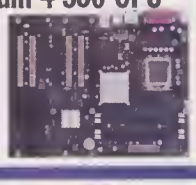


D925XCVLK Motherboard & Pentium 4 550 CPU

intel

$489.99

#MBM-D925X-550

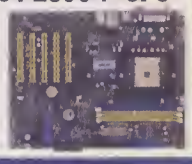


K8V Socket 64 Motherboard & Athlon 64 2800+ CPU

ASUS

$259.99

#MBM-K8V64-2800C



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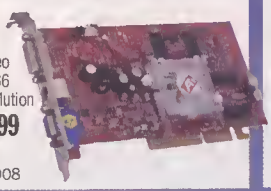

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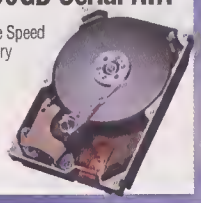
- ATA-150 Interface



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Linksys NSLU2 Network Storage Link

File server for home networks proves slow, lacks features

THE $99 LINKSYS NSLU2 Network Storage Link functions as an adapter for your network, letting you connect and remove USB flash and hard drives as needed. It works with a variety of drives and flash-memory keys, but the NSLU2 is sluggish when it comes to moving files around.

The NSLU2 contains an embedded file server that, together with the unit's hardware, lets you connect a pair of USB drives to an Ethernet network. Note that when you connect a drive for the first time, the NSLU2 insists on formatting that drive, destroying any data you've stored there. If you want to use a flash-memory key, you'll need to load a special utility to map the drive.

We were able to use the NSLU2 to connect a variety of USB drives, including a 160GB Maxtor OneTouch hard drive, a USB-to-SD adapter, and three different memory keys. The NSLU2 balked at connecting with our Iogear Ion USB 60GB external hard drive, and it can't be used to connect a printer or an optical drive.

In our time trials using the OneTouch drive, the NSLU2 was capable of writing and reading at only 10.1Mbps and 12.4Mbps, respectively—about one-tenth the drive's speed when connected via a USB link and about one-third the pace set by the $270 Buffalo LinkStation Network Storage Center, which has a built-in 120GB drive, as well as two USB ports that can be used to connect both an additional hard drive and a printer.

—*Brian Nadel*

EDITORS' RATING 6.0

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Connects two USB drives to a network

CONS Slow file transfers; lacks support for printers, optical drives, some hard drives; reformats new drives

Linksys, 800-546-5797
www.linksys.com

Mfr. Est. Price $99

Netgear WGT634U 108Mbps Wireless Media Router

Network storage has good range, poor connectivity

THE $149 NETGEAR WGT634U 108Mbps Wireless Media Router distinguishes itself from other 802.11g wireless routers by providing a USB 2.0 port to attach an external hard drive, letting you add storage capacity to all the computers on your network.

We noted a couple of shortcomings of the device, however. The media router doesn't support writing to NT File System (NTFS) volumes. Also, it doesn't work with USB hubs or with some external drives.

Still, storage-connectivity stumbles aside, the WGT634U is a more-than-capable wireless router that outpaced other 802.11g routers in our tests while demonstrating an impressive 225-foot range indoors.

—*Xiao Ming Wu*

EDITORS' RATING 6.9

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Supports USB storage; excellent throughput, range

CONS Lacks NTFS write support; incompatible with USB hubs, some external drives

Netgear, 888-638-4327
www.netgear.com

Mfr. Est. Price $149

D-Link DWL-2100AP

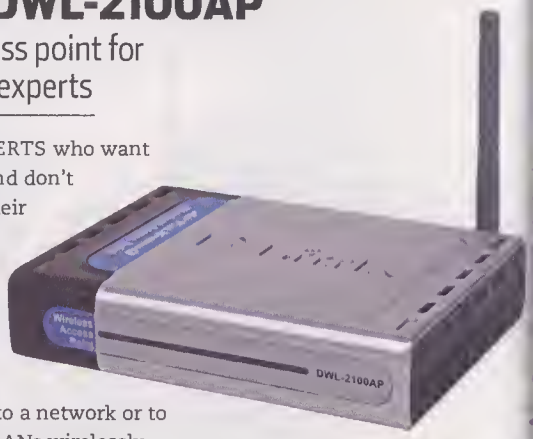
Speedy access point for networking experts

FOR TECH EXPERTS who want to go wireless and don't want to scrap their wired Ethernet routers, the $80 D-Link DWL-2100AP provides a quick, easy way to add 802.11b/g Wi-Fi to a network or to bridge existing LANs wirelessly.

If you already have a couple of D-Link wireless routers in place, the DWL-2100AP can function as a Wireless Distribution System (WDS) bridge between the two; you can't use the device as a bridge between other brands' equipment, however.

The unit's speedy 802.11g performance rivals that of the fastest access points and wireless routers we've seen. But you'll have to be up to speed on networking lingo: The setup info and manual are just too technical.

—*Stephanie Bruzzese*



EDITORS' RATING 7.1

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Lightning-quick 802.11g performance; WDS bridge capabilities

CONS Complex documentation

D-Link Systems, 800-326-1688
www.dlink.com

Mfr. Est. Price $80

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- 1 IEEE 1394 Port (Mini) and 1 TV-Out Port
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$2195

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- 3D Surround Sound (SPDIF 5.1CH output for DVD)
- 3 Hot-Keys for E-Mail, Browser and DVD Player
- Built-In Touchpad Pointing Device with Scrolling Keys
- 1 Type II PCMCIA Slot
- Infrared, Wireless Fast IR Interface
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HP iPaq RX3715 Mobile Media Companion

Fast, multimedia-centric Pocket PC delivers exceptional battery life

HEWLETT-PACKARD pitches its new iPaq RX3715 Mobile Media Companion not just as an organizational tool but also as an entertainment device. This $499.99 PDA comes with a built-in camera and apps for wirelessly managing your digital media throughout your home.

At 4.5x2.8x0.6 inches and 5.6 ounces, the iPaq RX3715 isn't particularly small or light. Its 3.5-inch transflective TFT screen occupies nearly the entire front, displaying a bright 240x320 pixels.

HP endowed this iPaq with plenty of multimedia muscle. Running Windows Mobile 2003 Second Edition, the iPaq RX3715 is equipped with a 400MHz Samsung S3C2440 processor and 152MB of RAM. A bundled iPaq Wireless utility makes it easy to command the device's integrated Wi-Fi and Bluetooth radios.

The internal camera has a maximum resolution of only 1,280x960 pixels (1.3 megapixels); with inconsistent colors and awful automatic white balance, it's no substitute for a stand-alone digital camera. The Mobile Media software lets you wirelessly copy and stream music, photos, and video from your PC. Unfortunately, the system is slow, taking several seconds to load a song or a photo, and it doesn't support playlists or slide shows. We also encountered several glitches that required a reset. What's more, you can copy MP3 files but stream only non-copy-protected WMA files.

In everyday use, however, the iPaq RX3715 was responsive, nimbly juggling multiple applications. Even better, it took a lengthy 8.5 hours to deplete the user-replaceable battery in our standard drain tests.

Although the digital entertainment features didn't inspire us, this PDA's features and top-notch performance make it well-worth considering. —*Colin Duwe*

EDITORS' RATING 7.4

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Long battery life; impressive performance; integrated Wi-Fi, Bluetooth; built-in camera; user-replaceable battery

CONS Complicated, immature media software

Hewlett-Packard, 888-999-4747
www.hp.com

Direct Price $499.99

Linksys WPC54G Wireless-G Notebook Adapter

Cover the basics with this Wi-Fi PC Card

THE $49 LINKSYS WPC54G WIRELESS-G Notebook Adapter is a plain-Jane 802.11g PC Card designed to add 802.11g connectivity to any laptop with a compatible slot.

The quick-installation guide walks you through the setup process, which entails little more than loading the bundled CD and inserting the PC Card. Wi-Fi-certified for both 802.11g and 802.11b, the WPC54G supports both the Wired Equivalent Privacy (WEP) and newer, stronger Wi-Fi Protected Access (WPA) encryption schemes. The Wi-Fi-connection software lets you enjoy WPA security even if you're running a version of Windows older than XP.

In our informal tests using NetIQ's QCheck, the adapter clocked a speedy 24Mbps. You can get about twice the throughput with enhanced PC Card adapters, and these also offer slightly better range in most environments. Still, the WPC54G will be adequate for most home networks and public hot spots. —*Allen Fear*

EDITORS' RATING 6.8

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Supports WPA; easy to install

CONS Shorter range than competing adapters

Linksys, 800-546-5797
www.linksys.com

Direct Price $49

SanDisk Cruzer Titanium

Key-chain storage that's both attractive and hardy

EDITORS' CHOICE

STYLISHLY CLAD in a metal casing, SanDisk's $129.99 Cruzer Titanium is among the sturdiest USB flash drives around. The company even claims the device is strong enough to survive a force of 2,000 pounds.

At 3x0.8x0.3 inches, the 512MB drive is by no means large, but you can find smaller ones. When you connect the device, its plastic slide glows blue. Once you take it out, you can retract the interface into the case, but there's no cap to protect the connector from dust and debris.

The drive comes preloaded with three useful applications: CruzerSync, which lets you sync with Outlook; CruzerLock, a password-protection and encryption utility; and CruzerCache, which lets you back up your PC's files.

Backward-compatible with USB 1.1, the USB 2.0 drive proved speedy in our informal tests. —*Justin Jaffe*

EDITORS' RATING 9.0

0 BETTER ›› 10

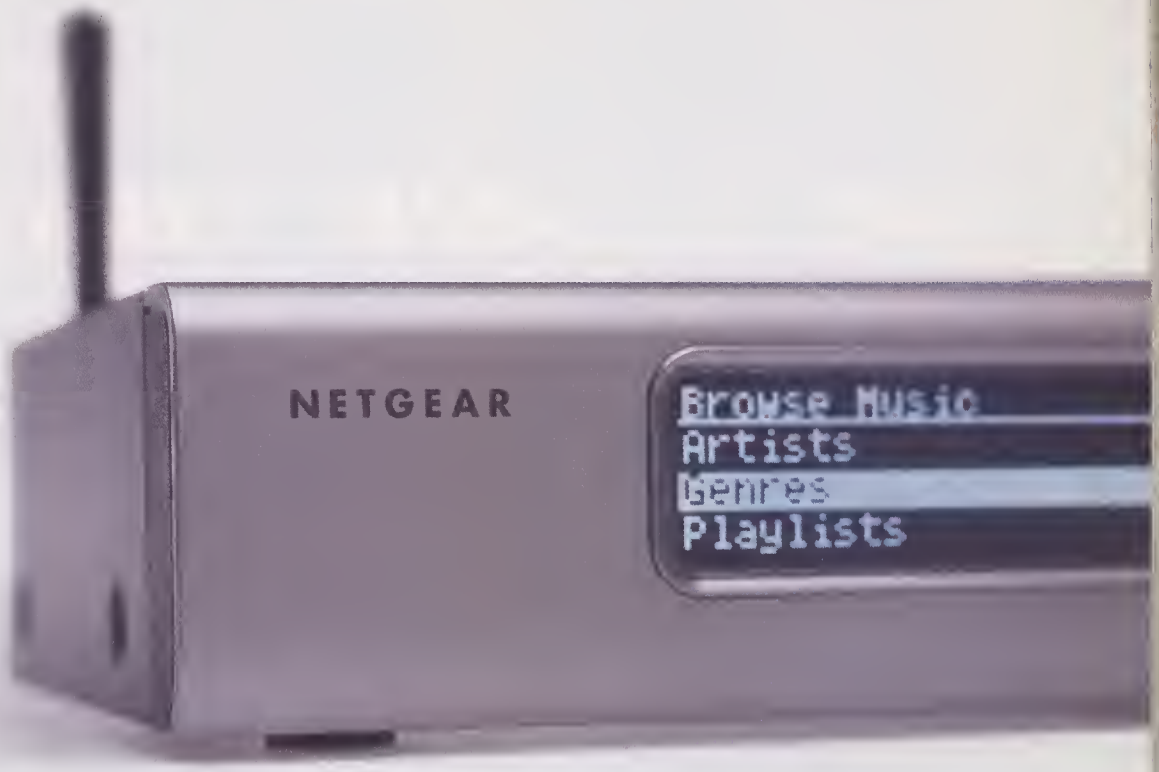
PROS Syncs with Outlook; includes password-protection, backup utilities; durable

CONS No protective cover; could be smaller

SanDisk, 800-977-5427
www.sandisk.com

Direct Price $129.99

SECTION CONTINUED ON PAGE 62



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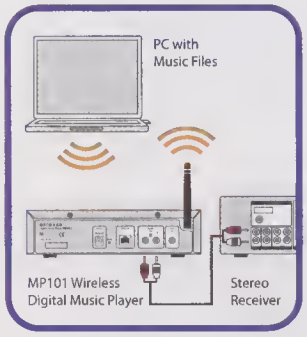

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Samsung SGH-d415

A phone with sleek looks but spares features

SAMSUNG'S SGH-d415 scores points for a cool design, but, at $299.99, it's a bit overpriced and missing some key features.

Measuring 3.8x1.9x1 inches (when closed) and weighing 4.2 ounces, the SGH-d415 fits in only the largest pockets, and a stubby, 1-inch external antenna adds even more bulk. On a more positive note, a generous, 2.1-inch color display slides up to reveal an ample keypad, while a barrel-like VGA camera lens rotates 180 degrees for broad picture-taking opportunities.

We like the SGH-d415's controls overall, but they could stand a few improvements. Two soft keys and a smallish four-way toggle help you navigate through the menus, but you won't find a dedicated OK button—instead, you must use one of the soft keys. Furthermore, the unit lacks a dedicated phonebook choice on the main menu, so editing and adding names requires more clicks than it should.

EDITORS' RATING 7.6

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Slider design; large, high-res display; integrated camera; rotating camera lens; e-mail support

CONS Bulky; no speakerphone, Bluetooth; unintuitive access to phonebook

Samsung Telecommunications America, 888-987-4357
www.samsungwireless.com

List Price $299.99

Though it supports personal e-mail, the SGH-d415 also comes up a bit short on higher-end features, including a speaker phone, Bluetooth connectivity, and voice dialing. Considering the growing number of 1.3-megapixel camera phones, we were also disappointed to see it was only VGA quality.

We tested the dual-band SGH-d415 (GSM 900/1900) in San Francisco using T-Mobile's service. Call quality was fine, and the volume level also was satisfactory. We beat the rated talk time of 4 hours by an extra half hour, but for standby time, we managed only 7 days, less than the promised 8.3 days.

While it certainly looks stylish enough to get itself noticed, the SGH-d415's somewhat spare feature set leaves you wanting more.

—Kent German

Jabra FreeSpeak BT250

Cozy Bluetooth earpiece offers clear calling

EDITORS' RATING 8.3

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Comfortable; impressive volume, clarity; large buttons

CONS Two-piece charger

Jabra, 800-435-5634
www.jabra.com

Direct Price $99.99

EDITORS' CHOICE

THE $99.99 Jabra FreeSpeak BT250 is a quality Bluetooth headset designed to make cell-phone calls effortlessly hands-free.

Ditching the aesthetics of standard headsets, the FreeSpeak wraps behind the ear in a gray-and-black crescent. A short boom mike extends from the bottom of the crescent, which holds the battery and the generously sized control buttons. As a result, the FreeSpeak has an extremely secure, comfortable fit, and you can wear it on either ear. We especially liked the MiniGel earpiece, which you can swivel and mold to your liking.

Conversations were loud and clear when we tested the headset with a few Bluetooth-enabled cell phones. Jabra promises up to 8 hours of talk time; our tested 11.5 days of standby time exceeded the company's claim. On the downside, road warriors may find the two-piece travel charger bulky.

—K.G.

Motorola A630

Chat it up on this advanced cell's hidden keyboard

MOTOROLA'S lilliputian $249 A630 is a text- and instant-messaging addict's dream. On the outside, the tiny, lightweight A630 looks like an ordinary candy-bar-style phone. Flip it open, and you'll discover a well-spaced QWERTY keyboard and a 65,000-color display.

Replete with all the standard mobile-phone features, the A630 also has a duplex speakerphone and a built-in VGA digital camera. The menu system is tricky to master, but with Bluetooth connectivity and the ability to view and send POP3, SMTP, and IMAP4 e-mail, the handset has personal messaging covered.

We tested the triband (GSM 850/1800/1900) phone with Cingular Wireless service and found reception to be good overall, though volume was a bit low in noisy environments. Tested battery life was respectable: 3 hours of talk time and a week of standby time.

—Joni Blecher

EDITORS' RATING 8.0

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS QWERTY keyboard; integrated camera; speakerphone; large color display; Bluetooth connectivity

CONS Unintuitive menu system

Motorola, 866-289-6686
www.motorola.com

Direct Price $249 (with a two-year contract)

SECTION CONTINUES ON PAGE 68

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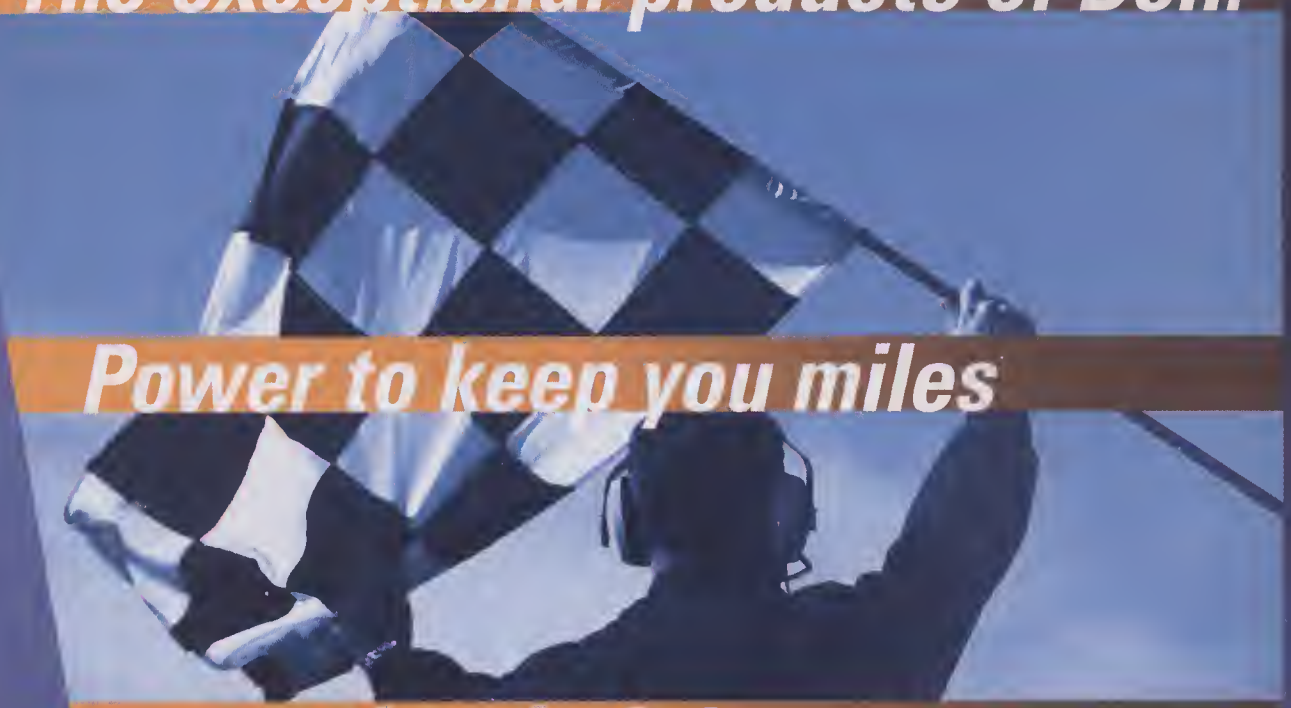

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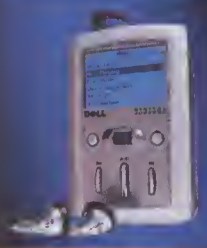

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Nikon Coolpix 5200

User-friendly digicam needs to brush up its images

LIKE ITS COOLPIX SIBLINGS, Nikon's $499.95 Coolpix 5200 is pocketable and highly automated. This model, however, packs in a 5-megapixel sensor.

The Coolpix 5200's uncluttered exterior features only six buttons, one dial, and a four-way control pad with an embedded Enter/OK key to activate any feature or setting. Nikon tucks away other settings in a group of multipage setup, playback, and shooting menus. The options are so well-organized that even neophytes should be able to get around easily.

EDITORS' RATING 7.4

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Outstanding red-eye prevention; simple operation

CONS Noisy images; dark default exposures

Nikon, 800-645-6687
www.nikoncoolpix.com

List Price $499.95

The camera's feature set includes all the basics you expect from a point-and-shoot, plus a few nifty extras. For example, burst mode includes a five-shot buffer option that lets you crank out pics at a furious rate but retain only the last five photos. Nikon goes beyond the routine red-eye fix, using a typical preflash as a prelude to in-camera processing that performs search-and-destroy algorithms on red-eye. The Coolpix 5200 can also capture 640x480-pixel movies at 30 frames per second for as long as your memory card's capacity allows.

If you plan to go from camera to printer without retouching your photos, you probably won't be disappointed in the image quality—as long as you deliberately overexpose a bit. The camera's default exposures tend to be a bit dark, with very low contrast. The default works well for flash photos, however, allowing for an even illumination of the scene. Photos looked impressively sharp for a small camera, but the images are quite noisy, even at the camera's lowest light-sensitivity setting.

Ultimately, the Coolpix 5200 is a friendly ultracompact for newbies who want to make big prints, but it's not for buyers highly conscious of image quality.

—David D. Busch

Sony Cyber-shot DSC-W1

Image quality spoils the view

EDITORS' RATING 7.2

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Large LCD; good zoom lens, macro capabilities

CONS Some image flaws; middling performance

Sony Electronics, 877-865-7669
www.sonystyle.com

Direct Price $399.95

THE $399.95 SONY CYBER-SHOT DSC-W1 has a sweet 2.5-inch LCD screen and some nice point-and-shoot features, but its overly processed images keep it off our list of top 5-megapixel cameras.

The DSC-W1 provides a good mix of automated features that help you capture pictures under a variety of conditions, coupled with options and manual features that will engage emerging photo enthusiasts. The LCD is large enough that you can carefully compose shots without eyestrain. It also features a fine 3x optical zoom, excellent macro-shooting capabilities, and an MPEG-movie mode. Impressive burst-mode capabilities highlight this camera's otherwise average performance figures.

But while images were properly exposed, they showed limited dynamic range and oversaturation, and weren't as sharp overall as they should have been. That, combined with excessive postprocessing on very detailed areas, makes complex images suitable only for scaled-down screen display. As a result, the DSC-W1's less-than-stellar image quality and average shooting performance fail to earn this cam higher marks.

—D.D.B.

Kyocera Finecam S5R

5-megapixel compact shooter disappoints

THE $499.99 KYOCERA FINECAM S5R offers little to set it apart from the pack of compact 5-megapixel cameras.

That's not to say it totally lacks useful features. For instance, the 3x zoom lens retracts into a shutter in the stainless-steel case, allowing the camera to be easily tucked into a pouch or pocket. The S5R also excels at continuous shooting, and its controls are easy to operate.

EDITORS' RATING 6.6

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Solid continuous-shooting capabilities; easy to use

CONS Noisy, fuzzy images

Kyocera, 732-560-0060
www.kyoceraimaging.com

Mfr. Est. Price $499.99

But the S5R's photos looked subpar. White balance was generally acceptable, though in auto mode, the digicam couldn't handle our indoor-lighting test. Exposure and dynamic range were reasonably good, but excessive postprocessing artifacts made the photos look noisy and fuzzy. As a result, camera shoppers can do better for the money.

—Matthew Klare

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Apple iPod

Tempting portable audio device gets even harder to resist

EDITORS' CHOICE

THE IPOD IS the closest thing to a perfect digital audio player we've ever seen, so what could Apple possibly do to make its 20GB fourth-generation iPod even better? Reducing the price to $299 was a good start, but Apple went even further, adopting the iPod Mini's intuitive Click Wheel, dramatically improving battery life, and incorporating some key firmware enhancements.

EDITORS' RATING 9.0

0 BETTER >> 10

PROS Lower price; new Click Wheel; improved battery life; On-The-Go playlists

CONS Dock not included

Apple Computer, 800-692-7753
www.apple.com

Direct Price $299

To cut costs, Apple eliminated some accessories from the 20GB package, including the dock, which is now a $39 extra. That's not a deal breaker, though, because those without a FireWire port can now power their iPods through a USB 2.0 port—both cables are included. The remote and carrying case have also become $39 accessories, but the earbud headphones and AC adapter are still included.

The slightly slimmer new version integrates the four buttons previously located beneath the display into the touch-sensitive Click Wheel, allowing for true one-handed navigation. The backlit display remains the same.

Playback features are all accessible and programmable from the iPod's customizable main menu, which now includes the popular Shuffle Songs setting. Apple has also swapped out the Browse menu option for the more aptly named Music selector. And the On-The-Go function now lets you create and save multiple playlists while away from your computer. The software update also lets you delete songs from playlists.

Battery life has been much improved; in our tests we achieved nearly 14 hours. Files transferred at a swift 5.2MB per second over FireWire.

—James Kim

Seal SFP-190

A little flash player with a lot of features

EDITORS' RATING 7.6

0 BETTER >> 10

PROS Easy to use; firmware upgradable to play protected WMA files; comfortable design

CONS LCD lacks backlight

Seal, www.seal-usa.net

Mfr. Est. Price $99

THE $99 128MB Seal SFP-190 offers just about everything you'd want in a thumb-drive MP3 player, including the ability to play secure WMA files.

The SFP-190's comfortable design is augmented by well-placed controls. The user-friendly interface makes menu navigation a breeze, and despite the slim screen, ID3-tag information is surprisingly viewable. The display isn't backlit, however.

A firmware upgrade from Seal's Web site lets you play copyright-protected WMA files, but to transfer the files to the device, you must use Windows Media Player or the application used to purchase the music. Sound quality was good, and the transfer speed via USB 1.1 was a brisk 0.75MB per second. Also, we matched the rated 12 hours of continuous playback on a single AAA battery.

—John Frederick Moore

Tivoli iPAL

A top-notch radio for portable tunes

WE FOUND nothing new or revolutionary about the $129.99 Tivoli iPAL—it's just Tivoli's original Portable Audio Laboratory (PAL) tabletop AM/FM radio with an Apple-friendly gloss-white-and-silver color scheme and an iPod-derivative name. The price remains the same, but the iPAL comes with a 40-inch white cable that connects to the iPod's—or any—standard headphone mini-jack.

The iPAL measures an elfin 6.3x3.8x4 inches and has a built-in rechargeable nickel-metal-hydride (NiMH) battery rated for 16 hours of life. An FM antenna extends and rotates for improved reception, and you'll also find a built-in AM antenna.

EDITORS' RATING 7.7

0 BETTER >> 10

PROS Rich sound; excellent AM/FM reception

CONS Mono-only sound

Tivoli Audio, 877-297-9479
www.tivoliaudio.com

Direct Price $129.99

Although the 2.5-inch magnetically shielded speaker is mono only, it delivers surprisingly full, rich sound. AM and FM reception was excellent, and the sound perked up even more when we connected the iPAL to an iPod.

—Steve Guttenberg

SECTION CONTINUES ON PAGE 74

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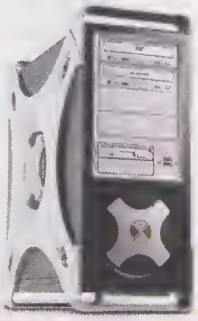

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Editors' Choice

Panasonic TH-50PHD6UY

Astounding picture quality in a stark design

AS SAVVY SHOPPERS have known for the last couple of years, Panasonic's professional plasma models are outstanding bargains. The $7,495 TH-50PHD6UY is one of the best-performing 50-inch plasma panels we've seen to date.

EDITORS' RATING 8.2

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Excellent performance

CONS No built-in tuner, speakers

Panasonic Broadcast and Television Systems, 800-528-8601
www.panasonic.com

List Price $7,495

We found the TH-50PHD6UY's stark look refreshing after all the gaudy design elements that characterize "consumer" panels—conspicuously missing any speakers, the set is basically all picture. The remote cannot control any other equipment, nor are the keys backlit, but we found it easy to navigate nevertheless. You'll need to connect some kind of external standard-definition or HDTV tuner to watch this television, and the set's connectivity is also quite limited.

Aside from a relatively blue out-of-the-box gray scale, we found very little wrong with the TH-50PHD6UY's picture. Color decoding was about as accurate as it gets, and the video processing with 2-to-3 pull-down—which optimizes playback of content that originated on celluloid film—was excellent. Dancing pixel artifacts were nearly nonexistent. Best of all, the black-level performance of this panel was second to none.

Another big plus is that the panel will save custom settings for each input. We were even able to calibrate the gray scale for each individual input source, which means that all video sources fed into the panel can be fully optimized. After we performed a full calibration for both DVDs and HDTV from our DirecTV HD satellite feed, the set's color accuracy was spot-on.

We were floored by the TH-50PHD6UY's picture quality. If you don't mind the lack of frills, this plasma is a solid value. —*Kevin Miller*

Yamaha DVX-S120

Sleek home theater setup lacks slick sound

THE $499.95 YAMAHA DVX-S120 Home Cinema System home-theater-in-a-box kit is tastefully designed, but our enthusiasm doesn't extend to its middle-of-the-pack sound quality.

EDITORS' RATING 7.3

0 BETTER ›› 10

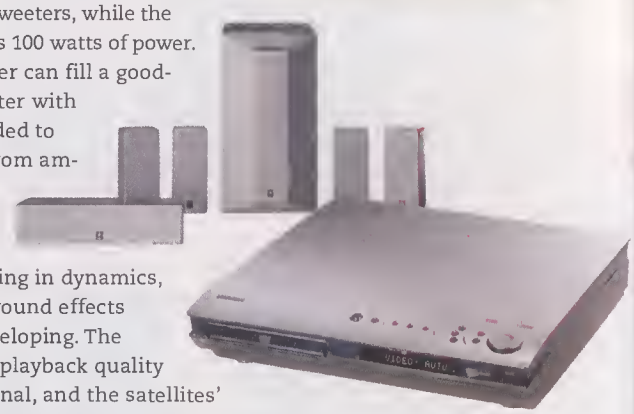
PROS Stylish design; effective surround sound

CONS Unremarkable sound quality

Yamaha Electronics, 800-492-6242
www.yamaha.com/home

List Price $499.95

The DVX-S120's receiver/DVD player houses a generous selection of surround-sound processing modes, along with Dolby Digital and DTS processing modes. The satellites and center speaker each feature twin 2-inch drivers, though no tweeters, while the subwoofer offers 100 watts of power.



The subwoofer can fill a good-size home theater with bass, but it tended to cross the line from ample to bloated and boomy. The satellites' sound was lacking in dynamics, though the surround effects were nicely enveloping. The DVX-S120's CD-playback quality was unexceptional, and the satellites' muted treble was overpowered by the prominent bass. We were satisfied with how vocals sounded, however. —*Steve Guttenberg*

Lite-On LVW-5005

No-frills DVD recorder needs some guidance

LITE-ON TECHNOLOGY'S $229.99 LVW-5005 DVD recorder distinguishes itself by its ability to record to all four major DVD formats: DVD+R, DVD-R, DVD+RW, and DVD-RW. Unlike more expensive competitors, however, the unit doesn't have an electronic programming guide, an infrared blaster, or even VCR Plus for shortcut timer recordings. Furthermore, satellite-TV and digital-cable viewers have to leave their boxes powered on to the correct channel to record their programs.

EDITORS' RATING 6.9

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Records to all four major DVD formats

CONS Cannot control cable, satellite boxes; so-so long-play video quality

Lite-On Technology, 408-935-5353
www.liteonamericas.com

Mfr. Est. Price $229.99

For recordings in the 1-hour HQ and 2-hour SP modes, quality was far beyond that of any VCR. The 4-hour EP mode was decidedly VHS-like, however, and the 6-hour SLP mode looked unacceptably muddy and blurry. For optimal quality, record from the S-Video or FireWire input using either the HQ or SP modes. —*John P. Falcone*

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Battling to Be Your Budget Balancer

Microsoft Money Premium 2005, Quicken Premier 2005

IN THE WORLD of personal-finance software, two names have faced off for the top spot over the last 13 years: Intuit's Quicken and Microsoft's Money. For the past few years, each product has offered similar features, including an account register, online banking, and cash-flow reports. The clincher, in our minds, has always been overall ease of use. While Money Premium 2005 brings additional convenience to Microsoft's app, our nod goes to Quicken 2005 Premier, thanks to an interface redesign. Read our reviews to find out why.

MICROSOFT MONEY PREMIUM 2005

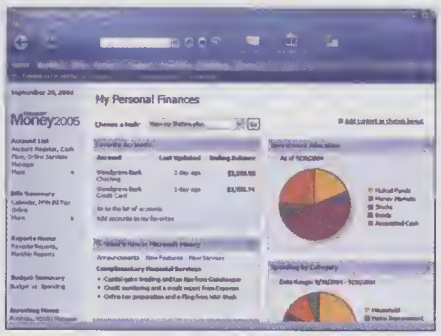
EDITORS' RATING 7.7

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS New, less-cluttered interface; automated account setup; outstanding support

CONS Account setup not as easy as Quicken 2005's; doesn't convert Quicken files properly

Microsoft Money has perpetually lingered a step or two behind Quicken. This year's Money Premium 2005 ($79.95 before a $30 rebate) comes with a simplified interface and a new automated online-banking setup to rival Quicken's famed ease of use and powerful money-management tools. Quicken 2005 maintains the edge in specific areas, such as the debt-reduction and account-setup modules, but when it comes to technical support, Money users have the advantage.



Microsoft Money Premium 2005

A much-improved setup procedure is one of the app's best enhancements. Previously, you had to manually enter financial information for each account, such as checking, savings, and credit cards. But in 2005, the Setup Assistant downloads account information automatically from your financial institution's Web site.

A simpler interface also graces Money 2005. Taking the less-is-more approach, Money's new Essential view provides a clean alternative to the 2004 version's busy, information-laden screens.

When trying to convert Quicken data, Money faltered, however. Although Microsoft has an online knowledge base on Quicken-import issues, we weren't able to find a solution for our problem. That said, Money users receive an outstanding array of support options, including three years of toll-free phone and e-mail support.

Money Premium 2005 is an essential upgrade for users of the 2004 version, but if you're new to finance software, you'll have an easier time starting out with Quicken.

QUICKEN PREMIER 2005

EDITORS' CHOICE

EDITORS' RATING 8.0

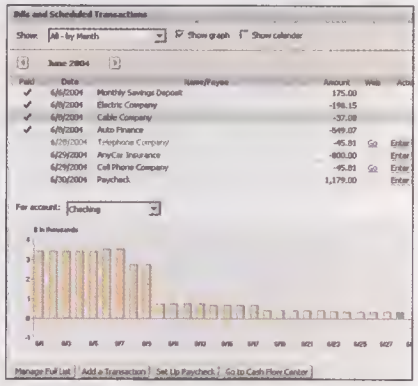
0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Honed feature set; easy installation, setup

CONS Investing Center still hard on eyes; pricey tech support for certain issues

The $69.95 Quicken Premier 2005 fixes a number of the nits we picked in version 2004, mostly in important yet humdrum modules such as Account Register and Category Manager. And that's about all it does. The new Quicken, devoid of whiz-bang enhancements, has all the sparkle of a midyear bug patch. Nonetheless, it retains its slight edge over its key rival.

Overall, Quicken 2005 has the easiest setup procedure in personal-finance software. You have the option of downloading checking, savings, and investment data directly from your financial institutions' sites, and importing Quicken 2004 data into the 2005 edition proved fast and painless. Our budget and investment data remained intact, too. Switching from Money 2004, however, is cumbersome and requires a separate utility available as a free download on the Quicken site. If you use Money 2004, you're better off upgrading to Money 2005.


Quicken Premier 2005

Intuit claims Quicken 2005 has 100 or so improvements. We found the changes plentiful but subtle. Nevertheless, the Investing Center page, a wall of data that's difficult to read, remains unchanged from last year's version.

Intuit now provides free phone help for Quicken installation and data-conversion problems, as well as for known product defects. For help with other issues, Intuit is stingier, charging $1.95 per minute with a $49.95 cap.

Quicken 2005's easy setup tools are great for personal-finance newcomers, but users of Quicken 2004 shouldn't feel compelled to upgrade. —*Jeff Bertolucci*

Product Summary

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COMPANY	Microsoft 800-642-7676 www.microsoft.com	Intuit 800-811-8766 www.quicken2005.com
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SECTION CONTINUES ON PAGE 82

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Intel® Pentium® M Processor 735 (1.7Ghz, 2MB L2 Cache, 400 Mhz FSB)	$ 1225	CNB123
Intel® Pentium® M Processor 1.6Ghz	$ 1175	CNB124

$ 1545

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- 10/100 Network Card & 56K V.92 Modem
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- 3-in-1 Built-in Media Reader
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3.2Ghz 800MHz FSB	$ 1695	CNB112
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Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor with HT Technology 3.0Ghz 800MHz FSB	$ 669	CBF113
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor with HT Technology 2.8Ghz 800MHz FSB	$ 649	CBF114

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XP 8000 DREAM

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- LG 16X DVD-ROM
- LG 52X32X52 CD-RW Drive
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Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor with HT Technology 3.0Ghz 800MHz FSB	$ 725	C1023
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor with HT Technology 2.8Ghz 800MHz FSB	$ 709	C1024

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- Build In TV-Tuner w/ FM Radio
- LG 8x DVD +-RW DVD Drive
- LG 16X DVD-ROM
- 3D 5.1 Wave Surrond Sound System
- Logitech Z640 5.1 Surround Sound Speaker System
- Creative Lab V.92 Fax Modem w/ Voice & 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- Wireless Microsoft Internet Keyboard and Mouse
- Philip Remote Control
- **Aluminum** Silverstone Stereo Component Case w/ 420Watt Super Quite Power Supply
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Media Center 2004 Edition
- Microsoft® Work 7.0
- Free First Year On Site Service plus 24/7 Tech Support

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Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor with HT Technology 3.0Ghz 800MHz FSB	$ 1269	CMC113
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CASE	ALUMINUM TUR80 X-SuperAlien SERVER CASE 425 WATT w/ WINDOW [+109]
Color	BLACK COLOR
PROCESSOR	Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 3.0GHz 800MHz FSB [+345]
MOTHERBOARD	*(DDR400-800MHz FSB) ABIT IS7-E I865PE 800MHz FSB M8 w/ SATA, LAN & SOUND [+85]
MEMORY	512MB (256MB X 2) PC3200 400MHz DUAL CHANNEL DDR MEMORY [+89]
HARD DRIVE	80GB 7200RPM ATA-100 HARD DRIVE [+79]
HARD DRIVE 2	NONE [+0]
RAID Configuration	OPTIONAL - REQUIRES 2 IDENTICAL HARD DRIVES [+0]
VIDEO CARD	NVIDIA® GeForce™4 MX440 64MB DDR AGP 8X EDITION w/ TV-OUT [+43]
DVD-ROM	16X DVD-ROM DRIVE [+33]
Color	BLACK COLOR
CD-RW	52X24X52 CD-RW DRIVE [+39]
Color	BLACK COLOR
MONITOR & LCD	(BLACK) ViewSonic® E90FB 19 INCH .21H mm SVGA Monitor

System Summary
Price: $1085.00
Aluminum X-SuperAlien Server 420Watt & Window (BLACK)
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 3.0G 800MHz FSB
ABIT IS7-E I865PE 800FSB AGP 8X Motherboard
512MB (256MB x 2) PC3200 DD Dual Channel Momery
80GB 7200 RPM ATA-100 Hard
NONE - Hard Drive 2
NVIDIA® GeForce™4 MX-440 64 AGP 8X
16X DVD-ROM Drive (BLACK)
52X24X52 CD-RW Drive (BLACK)
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- 17" Flat Screen Super Slim LCD Display
- LG Combo Drive (16X DVD-ROM & 52X32X52 CD-RW)
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Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 540 with HT Technology (3.2Ghz, 1MB L2 Cache, 8DD Mhz FSB)	$ 1309
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 530 with HT Technology (3.0Ghz, 1MB L2 Cache, 8DD Mhz FSB)	$ 1259
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 520 with HT Technology (2.8Ghz, 1MB L2 Cache, 8DD Mhz FSB)	$ 1245

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AMD Athlon™ 64 3500+ Processor	$ 1045	CAH114
AMD Athlon™ 64 3400+ Processor	$ 929	CAH115
AMD Athlon™ 64 3200+ Processor	$ 845	CAH1116
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- LG 8X DVO+-RW Drive & LG 16X DVD-ROM
- nForce 3 5.1 3-O Surround Sound
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- Creative Lab SB Audigy 2 E5 7.1 Sound w/ IEEE
- Creative Cambridge Inspire T7700 7.1 Surround 5ound System
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AMD Athlon™ 64 3200+ Processor	$ 635	CAJ116
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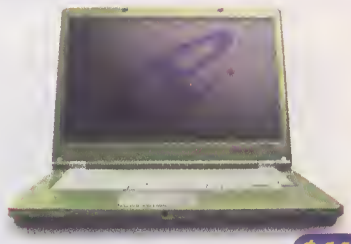

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- 80GB 7200RPM Ultra ATA100 Hard Drive
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AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 3000+	$ 775	CXD112
AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 2800+	$ 755	CXD113
AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 2600+	$ 729	CXD115

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AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 3000+	$ 609	CL112
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AMD Mobile Athlon™ 64 Processor 3400+	$ 1415
AMD Mobile Athlon™ 64 Processor 3200+	$ 1349
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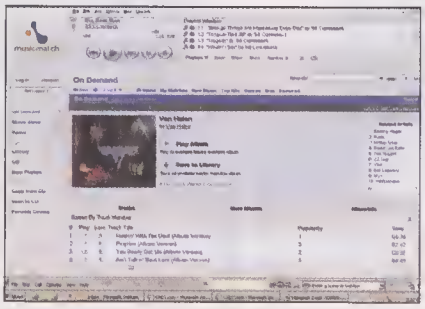
On Demand offers unlimited access to a library of more than 700,000 songs for a monthly fee as low as $7.95. The streaming service breaks new ground in the level of personalization and customization it provides—for example, you can create and save playlists that include music from the service and your personal library.

Just like the iTunes Music Store, Musicmatch's store is an integrated stand-alone application. In our tests, downloads flowed effortlessly and onto a WMA-supporting MP3 player without problems. Likewise, streams from On Demand were instantaneous. The downside: Using WMA files means no support for Apple iPods.



As in the past, Musicmatch comes in two versions: a free, downloadable Basic package and a feature-packed $19.99 Plus version. The Music Store works with both versions, but the Basic program makes you sit through upgrade ads. Only Plus users get Musicmatch's Super Tagging—a powerful ID3 tagger—and burn speeds up to 48x. New to the jukebox are an improved main screen and right-click options, as well as better folder management. All of this comes with the software's long-standing sluggish performance, however.

With its new features and on-demand service, Musicmatch has pushed digital music forward another notch.

—Rebecca Viksnins and James Kim

EDITORS' RATING 8.1

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS New On Demand subscription service; improved interface

CONS Download service's WMA files won't play on iPods

REQUIRES 300MHz or faster CPU (1GHz recommended); 128MB RAM; 250MB hard drive space; Windows 98 SE, Me, 2000, or XP

Musicmatch, www.musicmatch.com

Direct Price Free (Basic version), $19.99 (Plus version)

VoicePulse

Lack of 911 support weakens solid VoIP service

FOR MANY potential converts to Internet-phone, or Voice over IP (VoIP), service, the lack of emergency 911 support is a deal breaker—and VoicePulse is no different. Also missing from this service is the ability to transfer your current phone number.

VoicePulse does offer clear call quality and flexible privacy settings, though, and a couple of its lower-cost monthly-minute plans could serve you well as a replacement for traditional long-distance service. International calls, including Canada, aren't covered from within the United States, however.

VoicePulse's easy setup makes it a service to consider despite its drawbacks. It offers a Web-based interface for monitoring, configuring, and managing your account, and we were impressed by the level of customization afforded, though the interface needs some streamlining.

—Neil Randall

EDITORS' RATING 7.3

0 BETTER ›› 10

PROS Simple setup; powerful privacy features; clear calls

CONS No 911 support; can't transfer your current number to the service

REQUIRES Broadband connection; router with DHCP support; touch-tone phone

VoicePulse, 732-339-5100 www.voicepulse.com

Price $24.99 per month

MyDVD Studio Deluxe 6

What it is: Sonic's been in the burning business for a while now—first with CD, then DVD, apps—at the professional and consumer levels. MyDVD Studio Deluxe 6 is a solution for DVD and CD creation.

Who it's for: MyDVD is a consumer product through and through. Sonic did trickle down technology from its pro software, but everything about this package screams, "I've got a DVD burner—now what do I do?"

What you'll get: The average home user can use this app to transfer VHS tapes to DVD, archive digital video and photos, create slide shows with up to 1,000 images, and even edit video before burning, adding music and transitions along the way. Support for Dolby Digital audio and a nice Fit-to-DVD feature, which provides a visual gauge of video quality versus space remaining, are just a couple of the extras. Everything is accessible via an overly simplified interface.

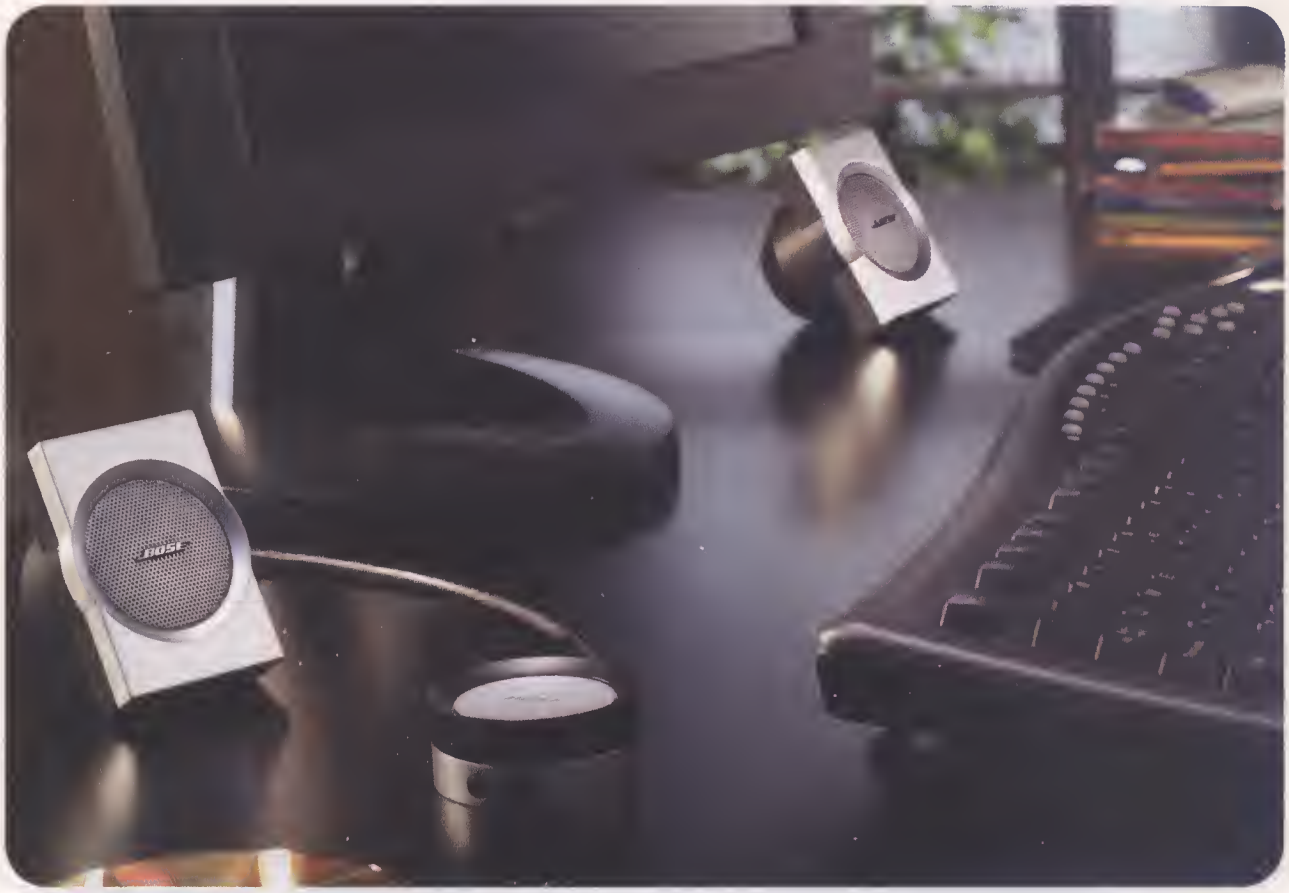
Outlook: While novices will find plenty to love, professionals will find this package underpowered. But if you're about to shoot your first home movies, transfer old ones, or just want to back up data, MyDVD Studio Deluxe 6 should do the trick.

■ *Sonic Solutions, 415-893-8000, www.sonic.com*

Direct Price $99.99

SECTION CONTINUES ON PAGE 88

Don't Just Take *Our* Word For It.



The award-winning Bose® Companion® 3 multimedia speaker system.

When we first introduced Companion® 3 speakers, we believed they would enable a whole new level of sound quality from your PC. Now the reviews are in, and others agree. You can expect newfound instrumental and vocal clarity from tiny satellite speakers. Resounding low notes from a hideaway Acoustimass® module. Spacious sound from TrueSpace™ stereo signal processing circuitry. Plus convenience and elegance: the satellites can sit on your desktop or easily attach to the sides of your monitor. And an elegant control pod puts speaker volume control, headphone jack and a second input – for a portable MP3 player, for example – all at your fingertips. Ready to experience more pleasure from music, movies and gaming soundtracks while at your computer? Upgrade to Bose® Companion 3 multimedia speakers...and give them a review of your own.

Bose Multimedia

Editors' Best PICK 2004

"...delivers surprisingly full, clean sound for music, movies and games."
– Laptop

"The Bose Companion 3 multimedia speaker system sounds a lot larger than it is..."
– Electronic House

"The Companion 3 satellites... deliver sound that doesn't play around."
– MacHome

"...worth every penny."
"...the sound quality is absolutely magnificent."
– Saskatoon Sun

For stores and dealers near you, call 1-877-696-BOSE, Ext. P78. Or visit www.bose.com/companion3

BOSE®
Better sound through research®

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IBM recommends Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional.

IBM ThinkPad R Series

GO with IBM Think Express Program

IBM Think Express models are designed, configured and priced with small to medium-size businesses in mind.

CNET Editors Choice Award, March 2004
IBM ThinkPad X40

***Availability**: All offers subject to availability. IBM reserves the right to alter product offerings and specifications at any time, without notice. IBM is not responsible for photographic or typographic errors. ***Pricing**: does not include tax or shipping and is subject to change without notice. Reseller prices may vary. **Warranty**: For a copy of applicable product warranties, write to: Warranty Information, P.O. Box 12195, RTP, NC 27709, Attn: Dept JDJA/B203. IBM makes no representation or warranty regarding third-party products or services. **Footnotes**: **(1) Embedded Security Subsystem**: requires software download. **(2) Mobile Processor**: Power management reduces processor speed when in battery mode. **(3) Wireless 11a, 11b and 11g**: based on IEEE 802.11a, 802.11b and 802.11g, respectively. An adapter with 11a/b, 11b/g or 11a/b/g can communicate on either or any of these listed formats respectively; the actual connection will be based on the access point to which it connects. **(4) Included software**: may differ from its retail version (if available) and may not include user manuals or all program functionality. License agreements may apply. **(5) Memory**: For PCs without a separate video card, memory supports both system and video. Accessible system memory is up to 64MB less than the amount stated, depending on video mode. **(6) Hard drive**: GB = billion bytes. Accessible capacity is less; up to 4GB is service partition. **(7) Wireless capability**: requires compatible wireless-enabled options, sold separately. **(8) Limited warranty**: Support unrelated to a warranty issue may be subject to additional charges. **(9) ServicePac services**: are available for machines normally used for

It makes managing wireless access easier from almost anywhere.

These IBM ThinkPad® notebooks come equipped with Intel® Centrino™ Mobile Technology, so users can work wirelessly when they're, well, far away from the office[13]. But they're also equipped with something that only IBM has — Access Connections. It makes switching between different network connections easier than ever. Once a connection profile's been created, simply select a location and it all happens automatically. There's no need to manually reconfigure settings or reboot each time the location changes. When it's easier for users to connect to a network on their own, a funny thing happens. It's also easier to disconnect from the help desk. To see a demo, go to **ibm.com**/shop/m507. Houston, we have a connection.

Secure wireless. Only on a ThinkPad.

1 866 426-7003 | **ibm.com**/shop/m507

IBM ThinkPad R51

Ultimate Value

Distinctive IBM Innovations:

- IBM Embedded Security Subsystem 2.0[1] – Strongest security as a standard feature
- IBM Access Connection – Helps reduce wireless helpdesk calls

System Features:

- Intel® Centrino™ Mobile Technology
  - Intel Pentium® M Processor 715 (1.50GHz)[2]
  - Intel PRO/Wireless Network Connection 802.11b/g[3]
- Microsoft Windows XP Professional[4]
- 14.1" XGA TFT display (1024x768)
- 256MB DDR SDRAM[5]
- 30GB hard drive[6]
- Ultrabay™ Enhanced CD-RW/DVD-ROM combo
- IBM UltraConnect™ Antenna for increased signal strength[7]
- 1-yr system/battery limited warranty[8]

NavCode 2B8380U-M419
THINK EXPRESS MODEL PRICED AT: **$1,299***

ServicePac® Service Upgrade:[9]
3-yr Depot Repair #30L9192 **$132**

IBM ThinkPad X40

Our thinnest and lightest

Distinctive IBM Innovations:

- IBM Embedded Security Subsystem 2.0 – Strongest security as a standard feature
- IBM Rescue and Recovery™ – One-button recovery and restore solution

System Features:

- Intel Centrino Mobile Technology
  - Intel Pentium M Processor ULV 1GHz
  - Intel PRO/Wireless Network Connection 802.11b
- Microsoft Windows XP Professional
- 12.1" XGA TFT display (1024x768)
- 256MB DDR SDRAM
- 20GB hard drive
- Integrated Gigabit Ethernet and modem
- Legendary IBM full-size keyboard[10]
- Only .94" thin[11]
- 2.7-lb travel weight[12]
- 1-yr system/battery limited warranty[8]

NavCode 23861CU-M419
THINK EXPRESS MODEL PRICED AT: **$1,499**

business, professional or trade purposes, rather than personal, family or household purposes. Service period begins with the equipment date of purchase. Service levels are response-time objectives and are not guarantees. If the machine problem turns out to be a Customer Replaceable Unit (CRU), IBM will express ship the part to you for quick replacement. Onsite 24x7x2-hour service is not available in all locations. For ThinkPad notebooks requiring LCD or other component replacement, IBM may choose to perform service at the depot repair center. Calls must be received by 5pm local time in order to qualify for Next Business Day service. **(10) Full-size keyboard:** As defined by ISO/IEC 15412. **(11) Thinness:** may vary at certain points on the system. **(12) Travel weight:** includes battery and optional travel bezel instead of standard optical drive in Ultrabay bay, if applicable; weight may vary due to vendor components, manufacturing process and options. **(13) Public network access limited:** Subscription may be required and fees may apply. **Trademarks:** The following are trademarks or registered trademarks of IBM Corporation: IBM, the IBM logo, Rapid Restore, Rescue and Recovery, ThinkPad, Ultrabay, UltraConnect and UltraNav. Microsoft and Windows are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation. Intel, Intel Inside, Intel Inside logo, Intel Centrino, Intel Centrino logo, Intel SpeedStep and Pentium are trademarks or registered trademarks of Intel Corporation or its subsidiaries in the United States and other countries. Other company, product and service names may be trademarks or service marks of other companies. ©2004 IBM Corporation. All rights reserved.
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Take a look at some of our latest models. And get connected.

Why IBM ThinkPad Notebooks?

To make IBM ThinkPad™ notebooks even more valuable, each one featured here can give you the efficiency, productivity and edge you need and comes with all the following ThinkVantage™ Technologies

IBM Active Protection System:
Butterfingers unite! Select IBM ThinkPad notebooks now include airbag-like technology to help protect your hard drive from some damage caused by drops and jolts

NEW! Rescue and Recovery with Rapid Restore:
Lost your data because of a software crash or virus? Recover previously saved data in minutes with our one-button solution

Access Connections:
Switch between wired and wireless connections

Embedded Security Subsystem 2.0:[1]
Hackers and thieves beware. Our combined hardware and software solution is designed to protect user data and keep it private

Access IBM:
Get the help you need, when you need it. One button on your ThinkPad notebook brings you a world of resources and assistance

IBM ThinkPad R51

System Features:

- Intel® Centrino™ Mobile Technology
  - Intel Pentium® M Processor 715 (1.50GHz)[2]
  - Intel PRO/Wireless Network Connection 802.11b/g[3]
- Microsoft Windows XP Professional[4]
- 15" SXGA+ TFT display (1400x1050)
- 256MB DDR SDRAM[5]
- 40GB hard drive[6]
- Integrated Ethernet and modem
- IBM Ultrabay™ Enhanced CD-RW/DVD-ROM combo
- IBM UltraConnect™ Antenna for increased signal strength[16]
- 1-yr system/battery limited[7] warranty[8]

NavCode 1836H8U-M419

THINK EXPRESS MODEL PRICED AT **$1,499***

With Microsoft Office Small Business Edition 2003:[9] $1,739

IBM ThinkPad T42

System Features:

- Intel Centrino Mobile Technology
  - Intel Pentium M Processor 1.50GHz
  - Intel PRO/Wireless Network Connection 802.11b/g
- Microsoft Windows XP Professional
- 14.1" XGA TFT display (1024x76B)
- 32MB ATI Mobility RADEON 7500 graphics
- 256MB DDR SDRAM
- 30GB hard drive
- Integrated Gigabit Ethernet and modem
- IBM Ultrabay Slim DVD-ROM
- IBM UltraConnect Antenna for increased signal strength
- Only 1" thin,[10] 4.5-lb travel weight[11]
- 1-yr system/battery limited warranty[8]

NavCode 2378DTU-M419

THINK EXPRESS MODEL PRICED AT: **$1,499**

With Microsoft Office Small Business Edition 2003: $1,739

ServicePac Service Upgrade:
3-yr Depot Repair
#30L9192 **$132**

IBM ThinkPad T42

System Features:

- Intel Centrino Mobile Technology
  - Intel Pentium M Processor 735 (1.70GHz)
  - Intel PRO/Wireless Network Connection 802.11b/g
- Microsoft Windows XP Professional
- 14.1" XGA TFT display (1024x768)
- 32MB ATI Mobility RADEON 7500 graphics
- 256MB DDR SDRAM
- 40GB hard drive
- Integrated Gigabit Ethernet and modem
- IBM Ultrabay Slim CD-RW/DVD-RDM combo
- IBM UltraConnect Antenna for increased signal strength
- 1-yr system/battery limited warranty[8]

NavCode 2378FTU-M419

THINK EXPRESS MODEL PRICED AT: **$1,749**

With Microsoft Office Small Business Edition 2003: $1,989

ServicePac Service Upgrade:
4-yr Depot Repair #69P9195 **$249**

IBM ThinkPad T42

System Features:

- Intel Centrino Mobile Technology
  - Intel Pentium M Processor 1.50GHz
  - Intel PRO/Wireless Network Connection 802.11b/g
- Microsoft Windows XP Professional
- 15" XGA TFT display (1024x76B)
- 32MB ATI Mobility RADEON 7500 graphics
- 256MB DDR SDRAM
- 40GB hard drive
- Integrated Gigabit Ethernet and modem
- Ultrabay Slim CD-RW/DVD-ROM Combo
- Only 1" thin, 5-lb travel weight
- 1-yr system/battery limited warranty[8]

NavCode 2378DWU-M419

THINK EXPRESS MODEL PRICED AT: **$1,649**

With Microsoft Office Small Business Edition 2003: $1,BB9

ServicePac® Service Upgrade:[12]
2-yr Onsite Repair/9x5/Next Business Day Response #30L91B9 **$197**

IBM ThinkPad T42

System Features:

- Intel Centrino Mobile Technology
  - Intel Pentium M Processor 735 (1.70GHz)
  - Intel PRO/Wireless Network Connection 802.11b/g
- Microsoft Windows XP Professional
- 15" SXGA+ Flexview TFT display (1400x1050)
- 64MB ATI Mobility RADEON 9600 graphics
- 512MB DDR SDRAM
- 60GB hard drive (7200 RPM)
- Integrated Gigabit Ethernet and modem
- IBM Ultrabay Slim CD-RW/DVD-RDM combo
- IBM UltraConnect Antenna for increased signal strength
- 3-yr system/1-yr battery limited warranty[8]

NavCode 2379DXU-M419

THINK EXPRESS MODEL PRICED AT: **$2,399**

ServicePac Service Upgrade:
4-yr Onsite Repair/9x5/Next Business Day Response #69P919B **$299**

IBM ThinkPad X40

System Features:

- Intel Centrino Mobile Technology
  - Intel Pentium M Processor LV 1.20GHz
  - Intel PRO/Wireless Connection 802.11b
- Microsoft Windows XP Professional
- 12.1" XGA TFT display (1024x76B)
- Intel Extreme Graphics 2
- 256MB DDR SDRAM
- 40GB hard drive
- Integrated Gigabit Ethernet and modem
- Legendary IBM fullsize keyboard[14]
- 7.5hr Li-Ion battery[15]
- 1-yr system/battery limited warranty[8]

NavCode 23866GU-M419

THINK EXPRESS MODEL PRICED AT: **$1,699**

With Microsoft Office Small Business Edition 2003: $1,939

ServicePac Service Upgrade:
3-yr Onsite Repair/9x5/Next Business Day Response #30L9195 **$243**

IBM ThinkPad X40 Solution Pack

IBM ThinkVantage Technologies:

- Longest standard battery life of any leading-brand notebook

System Features:

- Intel Centrino Mobile Technology
  - Intel Pentium M Processor LV 1.20GHz
  - Intel PRO/Wireless Network Connection 802.11b
- Microsoft Windows XP Professional
- 12.1" XGA TFT display (1024x76B)
- 256MB DDR SDRAM
- 40GB hard drive
- Integrated Gigabit Ethernet and modem
- 7.5-hr Li-Ion battery
- 3-yr system/1-yr battery limited warranty[8]

Accessories Included:

- ThinkPad X4 UltraBase Dock
- IBM Ultrabay Slim CD-RW/DVD-ROM combo

NavCode 23826UU-M419

THINK EXPRESS MODEL PRICED AT: **$2,199**

ServicePac Service Upgrade:
5-yr Onsite Repair/9x5/Next Business Day Response #69P9200 **$449**

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IBM recommends Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional.

(Monitor not included)

(Monitor not included)

(Monitor not included)

Why IBM ThinkCentre PCs?

Only IBM offers these features to protect your users, connect them, and keep them working. Each ThinkCentre™ desktop featured here can give them the efficiency, productivity and edge they need with the following ThinkVantage Technologies:

Rescue and Recovery with Rapid Restore:

Lost your data because of a software crash or virus? Recover previously saved data in minutes with our one-button solution.

Access IBM:

Get the help you need, when you need it. One button on your ThinkCentre desktop brings you a world of resources and assistance.

ImageUltra™ Builder:

Need to roll out new systems? Image and copy your operating system across your network in a flash. (Order separately)

IBM ThinkCentre A50

System Features:

- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor with HT Technology 3.0GHz
- Microsoft Windows XP Professional
- Tower form factor
- 256MB DDR PC3200[5]
- 40GB hard drive • CD-ROM
- Integrated 10/100 Ethernet
- Norton AntiVirus™ with 90 days of virus definition updates
- Lotus® SmartSuite® Millennium license
- 1-yr parts limited warranty with 1-yr limited onsite service[17]

NavCode 814821U-M419

THINK EXPRESS MODEL PRICED AT: **$699**

IBM ThinkCentre A50

System Features:

- Intel Pentium 4 Processor with HT Technology 3.0GHz
- Microsoft Windows XP Professional
- Small form factor — 62% smaller than a standard desktop[16]
- 256MB DDR PC2700
- 40GB hard drive • CD-RDM
- Integrated 10/100 Ethernet
- Norton AntiVirus with 90 days of virus definition updates
- Lotus SmartSuite Millennium license
- 3-yr parts limited warranty with 1-yr limited onsite service[17]

NavCode 841943U-M419

THINK EXPRESS MODEL PRICED AT: **$799**

ServicePac Service Upgrade: 4-yr Onsite Repair/9x5/Next Business Day Response #69P915B **$198**

IBM ThinkCentre A50

System Features:

- Intel Pentium 4 Processor with HT Technology 3.0GHz
- Microsoft Windows XP Professional
- Tower form factor
- 256MB DDR PC3200
- 40GB hard drive • CR-RW
- Integrated 10/100 Ethernet
- Norton AntiVirus with 90 days of virus definition updates
- Lotus SmartSuite Millennium license
- 1-yr parts limited warranty with 1-yr limited onsite service[17]

NavCode 814822U-M419

THINK EXPRESS MODEL PRICED AT: **$749**

IBM ThinkCentre A50 Ultra small form factor

System Features:

- Intel Pentium 4 Processor with HT Technology 3.0GHz
- Microsoft Windows XP Professional
- Ultra small form factor — 74% smaller than a standard desktop[15]
- 256MB DDR PC3200
- 40GB hard drive • DVD/CD-RW combo
- Norton AntiVirus with 90 days of virus definition updates
- Lotus SmartSuite Millennium license
- Integrated 10/100 Ethernet
- 1-yr parts limited warranty with 1-yr limited onsite service[17]

NavCode 809022U-M419 **$849**

With Microsoft Office Small Business Edition 2003: $1,0B9

ServicePac Service Upgrade: 3-yr Onsite/9x5/Next Business Day Response #54P1B61 **$132**

IBM ThinkCentre A51p

(model not shown)

System Features:

- Intel Pentium 4 Processor 530 with HT Technology
  - Processor speed 3.0GHz
  - 800MHz FSB
- Microsoft Windows XP Professional
- Tower form factor
- 512MB DDR2 PC3200
- B0GB hard drive • DVD/CD-RW combo
- Gigabit Ethernet-integrated
- 64MB ATI RADEDN x300 Pro
- 1-yr parts limited warranty with 1-yr limited onsite service[17]

NavCode 842722U-M419 **$1,049**

With Microsoft Office Small Business Edition 2003: $1,2B9

ServicePac Service Upgrade: 3-yr Onsite/9x5/4-hr Response #54P1B62 **$239**

intel inside centrino™ MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

IBM Think Express Program:

We've designed and priced many of our products specifically for small and medi[illegible] And [illegible] of [illegible] available direct from IBM [illegible] IBM Business Partner.

IBM Think[illegible]d Accessories

Belkin Components Universal No[illegible] Travel Surge Protector #22P7127 **$20**

Targus Wireless [illegible] #22P7438 **$27**

IBM ThinkPad [illegible] #73P3597 **$59**

ThinkPad 72W AC/DC [illegible] #22P9010 **$99**

ThinkPad Port Replicator II #74P6733 **$179**

IBM ThinkCentre Accessories

IBM UPS 500 #33L3477 **$99**

Lexmark X2250 All-in-One Printer #22P8810 **$100**

IBM ThinkVision L150 15" Flat Panel Monitor with [illegible] #W9SPAB1 **$379**

IBM

1 866 426-7003 | **ibm.com**/shop/m507

Internet or telephone (toll charges may apply). **(10) Thinness:** may vary at certain points on the system. **(11) Travel weight:** includes battery and optional travel bezel instead of standard optical drive in Ultrabay bay, if applicable; weight may vary due to vendor components, manufacturing process and options. **(12) ServicePac services:** are available for machines normally used for business, professional or trade purposes, rather than personal, family or household purposes. Service period begins with the equipment date of purchase. Service levels are response-time objectives and are not guarantees. If the machine problem turns out to be a Customer Replaceable Unit (CRU), IBM will express ship the part to you for quick replacement. Onsite 24x7x2-hour service is not available in all locations. For ThinkPad notebooks requiring LCD or other component replacement, IBM may choose to perform service at the depot repair center. Calls must be received by 5pm local time in order to qualify for Next Business Day Service. **(13) Public network access limited:** Subscription may be required and fees may apply. **(14) Full-size keyboard**: As defined by ISO/IEC 15412. **(15) Battery:** These model numbers achieved the Ziff Davis Media, Inc.'s Business Winstone® 2002 BatteryMark™ Version 1.0 Battery Rundown Time of at least the time shown. This test was performed without independent verification by the VeriTest testing division of Lionbridge Technologies, Inc. ("VeriTest") or Ziff Davis Media, Inc.; neither Ziff Davis Media, Inc., nor VeriTest makes any representations or warranties as to these test results. Winstone is a registered trademark and BatteryMark is a trademark of Ziff Davis Publishing Holdings, Inc., in the U.S. and other countries. A description of the environment under which the test was performed is available at ibm.com/pc/ww/thinkpad/batterylife. Battery life (and recharge times) will vary based on many factors including screen brightness, applications, features, power management, battery conditioning and other customer preferences. **(16) Size claims**: are based on a comparison of chassis volume to the volume of IBM's standard desktop chassis. **(17) Systems with limited onsite service:** are designed to be repaired during the applicable warranty period primarily with customer-replaceable parts provided by IBM. IBM will only send a technician onsite to perform a repair if (a) remote telephone diagnosis and/or customer part replacement are unable to resolve the problem, or (b) the part is one of the few designated by IBM for onsite replacement. For a list of onsite replaceable parts, contact IBM. Support unrelated to a warranty issue may be subject to additional charges. **(18) Certain IBM logo products**: are not manufactured, warranted or supported by IBM; IBM logos and trademarks used under license. Contact IBM for details **Trademarks:** The following are trademarks or registered trademarks of IBM Corporation: IBM, the IBM logo, ImageUltra, Lotus, NavCode, Rapid Restore, Rescue and Recovery, SmartSuite, ThinkCentre, ThinkPad, ThinkVantage, ThinkVision, UltraConnect, UltraBase, Ultrabay and UltraNav. Microsoft and Windows are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation. Intel, Intel Inside, Intel Inside logo, Intel Centrino, Intel Centrino logo, Intel SpeedStep and Pentium are trademarks or registered trademarks of Intel Corporation or its subsidiaries in the United States and other countries. Other company, product and service names may be trademarks or service marks of other companies. © 2004 IBM Corporation. All rights reserved.

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Computer Shopper editors handpick this month's best desktops, Tablet PCs, camcorders, multifunction devices, and disc-burning software.

Top 25

HOME DESKTOPS

›› Each of these PCs offers something cool for everyone in the family.

PRODUCT	PRICE	SPECS	BOTTOM LINE	RATING
Gateway eMachines T3092 www.e4me.com	$1,049	2.17GHz Athlon XP 3000+; 512MB DDR; 160GB hard drive; DVD±RW; 15-inch LCD; integrated GeForce4 MX	Among budget desktops, the eMachines T3092 is tough to beat. It delivers enough power to handle most office chores and some multimedia tasks such as editing photos, ripping MP3s, and burning DVDs.	8.2
HP Media Center m1050y Photosmart www.hp.com	$2,569	3.6GHz Pentium 4 560; 1GB DDR; 250GB, 160GB hard drives; DVD+RW; no monitor; ATI Radeon X600	It isn't cheap, but the m1050y sports a truly innovative design. In addition to being able to handle the expected Windows Media Center tasks, it also hosts a nifty removable hard drive inside. (See p. 34.)	7.9
Apple eMac www.apple.com	$999	1.25GHz PowerPC G4; 256MB DDR; 80GB hard drive; DVD-R/CD-RW; 17-inch built-in CRT; ATI Radeon 9200	The eMac delivers an attractive, adequately speedy, easy-to-use system without the flat-panel iMac's relatively high price. It's a perfect computer for Internet-minded consumers and students with few upgrade needs.	7.7
iBuypower Back To School www.ibuypower.com	$899	3GHz Pentium 4; 512MB DDR; 80GB hard drive; DVD/CD-RW; 19-inch CRT; GeForce FX 5200	The student PC is no longer the buttoned-down, no-frills, beige box of yesteryear. Witness the Back To School PC, which packs enough horsepower for schoolwork and study breaks alike into a snazzy, envy-inspiring silver tower.	7.6
Cyberpower Gamer Infinity 8000 Dream* www.cyberpowerpc.com	$1,723	3.4GHz Pentium 4; 512MB DDR; 160GB hard drive; DVD±RW; DVD; 17-inch LCD; GeForce FX 5700	With some aftermarket care, this PC can give you a powerful gaming future with minimal initial investment. For a gamer on a budget, the Gamer Infinity 8000 is a decent solution if you don't mind filling in some of its holes later.	7.0

TABLET PCs

›› These versatile portables stretch the boundaries of mobile computing.

PRODUCT	PRICE	SPECS	BOTTOM LINE	RATING
Toshiba Portégé M200 csd.toshiba.com	$1,776	1.5GHz Pentium M; 512MB DDR; 40GB hard drive; 12.1-inch TFT; 4.4 pounds	The Portégé M200's successful combination of notebook performance and tablet functionality makes it one of the best on the market. This well-designed tablet packs in plenty of creature comforts, including Wi-Fi and an SD-card slot.	8.0
Fujitsu Stylistic ST5000 Tablet PC www.fujitsupc.com	$2,299	1GHz ULV Pentium M; 512MB DDR; 60GB hard drive; 12.1-inch TFT; 3.4 pounds	Whether you need a tablet for home or work, consider this light, fast, and versatile slate. It features the same smart design as the older ST4000 model with a few impressive improvements, including a 1GHz low-voltage Pentium M processor.	7.7
Motion M1400 Tablet PC www.motioncomputing.com	$2,078	1.1GHz ULV Pentium M; 512MB DDR; 20GB hard drive; 12.1-inch TFT; 3.4 pounds	Tablet PCs aren't for everyone, but if you prefer pens to keyboards and do most of your thinking and computing on your feet, Motion's M1400 has just what you need. It even manages to pack a few nice extras into its thin case.	7.7
Fujitsu LifeBook B3000 www.fujitsupc.com	$1,799	1.1GHz ULV Pentium M; 256MB DDR; 60GB hard drive; 10.4-inch TFT; 3.3 pounds	Though it's not a true tablet—it doesn't run Microsoft's specialized Tablet PC OS—the B3000 is a unique amalgam of a handheld, tablet, and ultralight laptop. The unit also offers its trademark tap screen, long battery life, and integrated Wi-Fi.	7.6
Acer TravelMate C301XCi www.acer.com/us	$1,549	1.5GHz Pentium M; 512MB DDR; 40GB hard drive; DVD/CD-RW; 14.1-inch TFT; 6.7 pounds	Acer's fast TravelMate C301XCi supersizes the tablet format. This hefty convertible machine features an optical drive—a rarity in a tablet—and serves up outstanding battery life and mobile performance, plus a very large screen.	7.1

= Editors' Choice * = Configuration changed from original review.

CAMCORDERS

» Record those must-share moments with one of these affordable videocams.

PRODUCT	PRICE	SPECS	BOTTOM LINE	RATING
Canon Optura 40 usa.canon.com	$899	1.2-megapixel (effective) video; 2.5-inch LCD; 14x optical zoom; MiniDV; 1.3 pounds	The Optura 40 is compact, has a bright 2.5-inch LCD, and shoots clean footage as well as 2-megapixel still photos. The Optura's video light also significantly improves video taken in low light.	8.0
Sony Handycam DCR-PC109 www.sonystyle.com	$899.99	690,000-pixel video; 2.5-inch LCD; 10x optical zoom; MiniDV; 13 ounces	This pocket MiniDV camcorder excels outdoors; back home, you'll love the Handycam Station dock. Appealing to neatniks, the dock will keep your wires tidy and easy to access.	7.6
Canon Optura 300 usa.canon.com	$729	1.2-megapixel (effective) video; 2.5-inch LCD; 10x optical zoom; MiniDV; 1 pound	The slick, compact Optura 300 is an excellent choice for picky shooters who want a solid vacation camcorder without the excess baggage. Its small size won't weigh you down and gives you the stamina to shoot all day.	7.5
Hitachi DZMV550A www.hitachi.us/tv	$569	680,000-pixel video; 2.5-inch LCD; 18x optical zoom; DVD-RAM/DVD-R; 1.1 pounds	With an 18x optical zoom and in-camera recording to DVD, the DZMV550A offers a competent but entry-level feature set. It's a great choice if you want to tweak your video in the field.	7.0
Panasonic D-snap SV-AV100 www.panasonic.com	$999.95	704x480 or 352x480 MPEG-2 video; 2.5-inch LCD; 10x optical zoom; SD/MMC; 5.4 ounces	One of the world's smallest MPEG-2 cameras, the D-snap SV-AV100 measures a scant 3.5x1.3x2.6 inches. But don't let that size fool you: This camcorder shoots better MPEG-2 movies than most other devices this small.	7.0

MULTIFUNCTION DEVICES

» Print, scan, copy, or fax with one of these overachieving MFPs.

PRODUCT	PRICE	SPECS	BOTTOM LINE	RATING
HP Officejet 4215 All-in-One www.hp.com	$149.99	4,800x1,200dpi max. resolution; 8.5x14-inch max. paper size; USB 2.0	With a bargain-basement price, the Officejet 4215 is a multitalented multifunction printer for the home or the office. Not the speediest, this machine favors quality over quantity, producing equally impressive printed, copied, and scanned output.	8.0
Epson Stylus CX6400 www.epson.com	$199	5,760x1,440dpi max. resolution; 8.5x44-inch max. paper size; USB 2.0	Epson's CX6400 multifunction printer offers plenty of office tools at a low price for both students and families. Considering its $199 price, it has an impressive depth of features for storing, printing, and editing digital images.	7.9
Brother MFC-8220 www.brother.com	$299	2,400x600dpi max. resolution; 8.5x14-inch max. paper size; USB 2.0, Ethernet	Small offices looking to save a buck will appreciate the features in the Brother MFC-8220. In addition to network capabilities, the design, resembling a cash register, emphasizes economy of space.	7.8
Dell 922 All-in-One Photo Printer www.dell.com	$99	4,800x1,200dpi max. resolution; 8.5x19-inch max. paper size; USB 2.0	The 922 All-in-One is an affordable color inkjet multifunction that doubles as a flatbed scanner. If you want a fast scanner that produces high-quality prints, this is the one.	7.6
HP PSC 2510 Photosmart All-in-One www.hp.com	$349.99	4,800x1,200dpi max. resolution; 8.5x14-inch max. paper size; 802.11b Wi-Fi, USB 2.0, Ethernet	The PSC 2510 Photosmart integrates photo-quality printing, faxing, scanning, and copying into one seamless and easy-to-use device. Built-in wireless capabilities and a competitive price also make this MFP a good value.	7.6

DVD- AND CD-BURNING SOFTWARE

» The software you need to quench your yearning for burning.

PRODUCT	PRICE	REQUIRES	BOTTOM LINE	RATING
Ulead DVD Workshop 2 www.ulead.com	$495	800MHz Pentium III or faster CPU; 128MB RAM; 500MB hard drive space; Windows 2000 or XP	DVD Workshop 2's wonderfully intuitive interface and huge selection of DVD-authoring tools will please professionals and advanced hobbyists alike. It sets a new standard for sub-$1,000 DVD-authoring packages.	8.7
Nero 6 Ultra Edition www.nero.com	$99.99	300MHz or faster CPU; 64MB RAM; 500MB hard drive space; Windows 95, 98, 98 SE, Me, NT 4.0, 2000, or XP	Nero 6 Ultra is a versatile, comprehensive CD- and DVD-burning suite that's an excellent value. Its DVD-authoring app compares favorably with all but its pro-level competitors. You also get a highly capable backup program.	8.3
Roxio Easy Media Creator 7 www.roxio.com	$99.95	500MHz Pentium III or faster CPU; 128MB RAM; 1GB hard drive space; Windows 2000 or XP	With more integrated digital-media components than any other suite, Easy Media Creator 7 offers the most comprehensive and well-integrated suite of CD- and DVD-burning tools on the market. It's rich enough for beginners or advanced users.	8.0
Pinnacle Instant CD/DVD 8 www.pinnaclesys.com	$49.99	500MHz Pentium III or faster CPU; 64MB RAM; 650MB hard drive space; Windows 98 SE, Me, 2000, or XP	Instant CD/DVD 8 offers an improved interface and some useful new tools. Along with letting you burn DVDs and CDs, the program now features an InstantCinema function, which plays DVDs, VCDs, SVCDs, and other video formats.	7.0
Ulead DVD MovieFactory 3 Disc Creator www.ulead.com	$79.95	800MHz Pentium III or faster CPU; 256MB RAM; 400MB hard drive space; Windows 98 SE, Me, 2000, or XP	In its latest iteration, Ulead's MovieFactory 3 Disc Creator joins the ranks of solid, multipurpose disc-burning programs. The application can now create data and music discs in addition to video DVDs.	7.0

REVIEWS SECOND OPINION

FEEDBACK FROM READERS WHO BUY AND USE THE PRODUCTS WE REVIEW

CYBERPOWER GAMER INFINITY 8000 DREAM

PRICE: $1,685
www.cyberpowersystem.com
REVIEWED: September 2004, p. 48

WE SAID...
EDITORS' RATING: 7.0
PROS: Lots of expandability; support for PCIe devices; Gigabit, 10/100 Ethernet ports
CONS: Uninspired graphics performance; noisy fans; RAID with a single drive
THE BOTTOM LINE: We liked its expandability, dual DVD drives, ample hard drive, and year of onsite service, but the Gamer Infinity 8000's gaming performance came up short.

YOU SAID...

"Use caution with Cyberpower."
PROS: Very competitive prices, and the build quality is solid.
CONS: When I placed my order, they were out of some of the items I ordered. Instead of informing me, they just substituted a comparable item and adjusted the price difference. I was fine with this but was upset that I wasn't notified about the change.
—**Dave D.**, *July 26, 2004*

TOSHIBA TECRA M2-S630

PRICE: $1,899
www.toshiba.com
REVIEWED: September 2004, p. 54

WE SAID...
EDITORS' RATING: 7.2
PROS: Long-lasting battery; small, light; swappable media bay; integrated Wi-Fi, Bluetooth
CONS: Sticky touch pad; sagging keyboard
THE BOTTOM LINE: For business travelers, the Tecra M2-S630 is easy to carry and convenient to use, but newer thin-and-lights outpace it.

YOU SAID...

"Solid keyboard, awesome warranty."
PROS: Perfect, fully customizable dual pointing devices; a very solid keyboard; excellent, friendly tech support; awesome warranty with free shipping to repair depot (and a cheap accidental-damage add-on, which will repair or replace your computer if you spill a Coke on the keyboard).
CONS: Styling is a little utilitarian for some; screen res is decent, nothing fancy, but you can upgrade to high-res for $79; customized computers will take a while to ship; comes Bluetooth-ready, with Bluetooth not installed.
—**Jessica**, *May 30, 2004*

= Editors' Choice

DELL AXIM X30

PRICE: $349
www.dell.com
REVIEWED: September 2004, p. 60

WE SAID...
EDITORS' RATING: 8.1
PROS: Fast performance; integrated Wi-Fi, Bluetooth; removable battery; thin, light
CONS: Uncomfortable stylus
BOTTOM LINE: Offering strong performance, the Axim X30 is high-end all the way. Tricked out with a zippy new processor, robust wireless-networking options, and the latest Windows Mobile operating system, this heavy-duty PDA is quite a handful.

YOU SAID...

"An excellent buy."
PROS: Dell designers put a lot of thought into this release: a fast processor, eliminated the CF slot, and incorporated Wi-Fi and Bluetooth while keeping the price pretty competitive. This will definitely replace my existing Dell Axim.
CONS: No CF slot. As a previous Axim owner, I have several less-expensive CF cards with data. But this shortfall is made up for by the newer features.
—**Antwash**, *September 1, 2004*

IRIVER IFP-790

PRICE: $179.99
www.iriveramerica.com
REVIEWED: September 2004, p. 62

WE SAID...
EDITORS' RATING: 8.7
PROS: Excellent sound, earbuds; cool design; loaded with features; USB 2.0 port; long battery life; accepts WMA files from many online music stores
CONS: Doesn't display as a removable drive in Windows; drivers, software required for connection
BOTTOM LINE: Styled in smooth, molded curves and silver-and-metallic-red coloring, this worthy successor to the iFP-390T is quite a looker. Its style is backed up by world-class features and performance.

YOU SAID...

"It fell apart."
PROS: Looks great and sounds good. Good battery life.
CONS: I dropped it less than 24 hours after purchase, and it fell apart. I returned it for a second player and used it at the gym; a little sweat and—fizzz—it broke again. I read in the latest CNET bulletin that Samsung has the "player." I hope they have a player that's made of something more than glue and plastic.
—**Gymbo**, *May 29, 2004*

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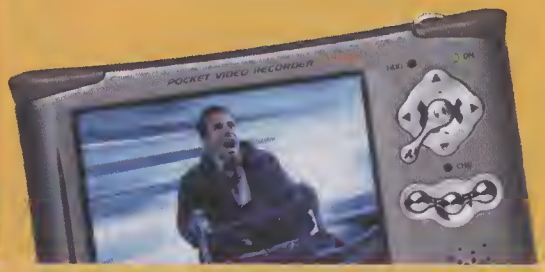

The Best In Tech 2004

We Select the Top 100 PCs, Hardware, Software, Games, and Web Services of the Year.

CALL IT THE YEAR OF REFINEMENT. A look at our selections for the best tech products of the year will tell you that there's been no radical breakthrough in computer hardware or software this year. Sure, personal video players and AMD's Athlon 64 chip have come of age, and we pay suitable homage to them on page 112, but these developments were already on last year's radar. Rather, the story this year has been improvements by degrees: PCs are getting faster, hard drives are getting bigger, smartphones are getting smarter, and—well, you get the picture.

That doesn't mean there was a lack of great devices, applications, and services for us to drool over. In fact, for the first time, we've introduced a whole section devoted to the best home theater products of the year, because technology is moving rapidly from the desktop into your living room. You'll also notice categories for such emerging products as gaming notebooks and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services. Elsewhere, old favorites such as Dell desktops and nVidia graphics cards were pushed aside by hard-charging competitors. So, without further ado, here's the top of the tech crop, circa 2004.

DESKTOPS

BEST BUDGET PC
Gateway eMachines T3092

The T3092 offers a strong mix of features and performance for the price. Out of the box, it can handle multimedia tasks like editing photos and burning DVDs at 8x. It's everything a budget PC should be, with room for expansion and upgrades down the road.

Gateway • www.e4me.com
$649.99 (base model)

Hypersonic Fury GX

BEST MIDRANGE PC
Hypersonic Fury GX

Proof there is such a thing as an affordable gaming system, the Fury GX delivers pixel-pushing power to play 3D games without emptying your checking account. Its solid midrange Pentium 4 processor, ATI graphics card, and space for expansion make this PC a treat now, with potential for the future.

Hypersonic PC Systems
www.hypersonic-pc.com
$2,189 (base model)

BEST HIGH-END PC
Velocity Micro Raptor Extreme Edition

The Raptor Extreme defines the word *more*. It has more processing power, more L2 cache, more memory, more drive space, and more A/V panache than your average high-end PC. You'll pay nearly four grand for all that power, but who'd want to do battle with anything less than the best?

Velocity Micro
www.velocitymicro.com • $3,990

BEST SMALL-FORM-FACTOR PC
Polywell MiniQ Qbox 865T

Good things really do come in small packages. Perfect for LAN parties and stylish enough for your living room, the Qbox 865T is a potent portable PC. With a 3.4GHz Pentium 4 Extreme Edition CPU, a versatile ATI All-in-Wonder graphics card, and 1GB of memory, it can handle almost anything—at home or on the road.

Polywell Computers • www.polywell.com • $2,840

BEST GAMING PC
ABS Ultimate M5-64

Attention gamers and power users involved with intensive graphics apps—this is your machine. Decked out in a slick silver tower and loaded with a powerful Athlon 64 processor, 2GB of memory, and a blistering Radeon X800 XT graphics card, the Ultimate M5-64 is one of the fastest gaming systems we've seen.

ABS Computer Technologies • www.abspc.com
$1,899 (base model)

Polywell MiniQ Qbox 865T

BEST-DESIGNED PC
Apple Power Mac G5

Apple's always a step ahead when it comes to design, and the anodized-aluminum Power Mac G5 is no exception. From the perforated front and rear panels to the built-in case handles, its beauty is undeniable. The near-silent desktop's inside is just as exquisite, with superior cooling features and no cables in sight.

Apple Computer
www.apple.com
$1,999 (base model)

BEST SMALL-OFFICE/HOME-OFFICE PC
HP Compaq Business Desktop DC7100

The Compaq DC7100 is filled with solid future-proofed hardware with modular innards for easy component swapping, all in an easy-to-stow package. Match it with security features and a three-year warranty, and you've got the perfect PC for corporate or SOHO environments.

Hewlett-Packard
www.hp.com
$741.01 (base model)

BEST MEDIA CENTER PC
Alienware DHS-301

We've seen several Media Center PCs try and fail where Alienware's DHS-301 succeeds. It comes well stocked in its base configuration, but a few upgrades can make the DHS-301 a perfect all-in-one entertainment center. Plus, its slick, horizontal case fits right in with your other home theater equipment.

Alienware
www.alienware.com
$1,982 (base model)

BEST ALL-IN-ONE PC
Apple iMac G5

Apple, a pioneer of the all-in-one PC, has taken inspired design a step further with a sleeker, faster, more elegant iMac. The new streamlined model, crafted by the iPod design team, packs a powerful 1.6GHz or 1.8GHz PowerPC G5 CPU and occupies less desktop space than its predecessor since the parts are hidden behind its wide-screen LCD.

Apple Computer
www.apple.com
$1,899 (20-inch LCD)

Apple iMac G5

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PACKAGE FEATURES		
Web space	1,000 MB	1,000 MB
FTP accounts	1	1
Monthly Transfer Volume	25 GB	25 GB
1&1 Control Panel	✓	✓
Logfiles	✓	✓
MARKETING TOOLS		
1&1 Chat channels	1	1
1&1 WebStatistics	✓	✓
SITE-BUILDING TOOLS		
WebsiteCreator	12 pages	12 pages
Software bundle worth $600	✓	✓
FrontPage extensions	✓	✓
CGI library	✓	✓
Active Server Pages	–	✓
DOMAIN NAMES		
Included Domains	1	1
Subdomains	10	10
Run multiple independant sites	✓	✓
Full DNS management	✓	✓
E-MAIL		
POP3 accounts	200	200
Aliases, auto-responders, forwarding	✓	✓
1&1 WebMail	✓	✓
Symantec Virus Scanners	1 account	1 account
SECURITY FEATURES		
Protected by up-to-date firewall	✓	✓
Daily backups	✓	✓
Password protected directories	✓	✓
Dedicated SSL Certificate	optional	optional
PER MONTH	$4.99	$6.99

IMPROVED

BUSINESS PACKAGE

FROM $9.99 PER MONTH

INCLUDES 3 DOMAINS

PACKAGE FEATURES		
Web space	2,000 MB	2,000 MB
FTP accounts	5	5
Monthly Transfer Volume	50 GB	50 GB
1&1 Control Panel	✓	✓
Logfiles	✓	✓
MARKETING TOOLS		
1&1 Chat channels	5	5
1&1 WebStatistics	✓	✓
In2site Live Dialogue	✓	✓
1&1 Newsletter Tool	✓	✓
1&1 WebElements	✓	✓
SITE-BUILDING TOOLS		
WebsiteCreator	18 pages	18 pages
Software bundle worth $600	✓	✓
FrontPage extensions	✓	✓
CGI library	✓	✓
Active Server Pages	–	✓
ASP.NET, .NET Framework	–	✓
Perl, PHP3 and PHP4	✓	–
1&1 WebDatabase	✓	✓
Database	1 MySQL	1 Access
Cron Jobs	✓	–
SSI (Server side includes)	✓	✓
DOMAIN NAMES		
Included Domains	3	3
Subdomains	50	50
Run multiple independant sites	✓	✓
Full DNS management	✓	✓
E-MAIL		
POP3 accounts	500	500
Aliases, auto-responders, forwarding	✓	✓
1&1 WebMail	✓	✓
Symantec Virus Scanners	3 accounts	3 accounts
SECURITY FEATURES		
Protected by up-to-date firewall	✓	✓
Daily backups	✓	✓
Password protected directories	✓	✓
SSH Secure Shell Access	✓	–
Dedicated SSL Certificate	optional	optional
PER MONTH	$9.99	$12.99

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DEVELOPER PACKAGE

FROM $19.99 PER MONTH

INCLUDES 5 DOMAINS

PACKAGE FEATURES		
Web space	4,000 MB	4,000 MB
FTP accounts	25	25
Monthly Transfer Volume	100 GB	100 GB
1&1 Control Panel	✓	✓
Logfiles	✓	✓
MARKETING TOOLS		
1&1 Chat channels	10	10
1&1 WebStatistics	✓	✓
In2site Live Dialogue	✓	✓
1&1 Newsletter Tool	✓	✓
1&1 WebElements	✓	✓
SITE-BUILDING TOOLS		
WebsiteCreator	25 pages	25 pages
Software bundle worth $600	✓	✓
FrontPage extensions	✓	✓
CGI library	✓	✓
Active Server Pages	–	✓
ASP.NET, .NET Framework	–	✓
Perl, PHP3 and PHP4	✓	–
1&1 WebDatabase	✓	✓
Database	3 MySQL	MS Access, MS SQL
Cron Jobs	✓	–
SSI (Server side includes)	✓	✓
Advanced Developer Tools	✓	–
DOMAIN NAMES		
Included Domains	5	5
Subdomains	200	200
Run multiple independant sites	✓	✓
Full DNS management	✓	✓
E-MAIL		
POP3 accounts	1,000	1,000
Aliases, auto-responders, forwarding	✓	✓
1&1 WebMail	✓	✓
Symantec Virus Scanners	6 accounts	6 accounts
SECURITY FEATURES		
Protected by up-to-date firewall	✓	✓
Daily backups	✓	✓
Password protected directories	✓	✓
SSH Secure Shell Access	✓	–
Dedicated SSL Certificate	✓	✓
PER MONTH	$19.99	$24.99

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NOTEBOOKS

BEST DESKTOP REPLACEMENT
HP Pavilion ZD7000

The Pavilion ZD7000 is among the fastest, best-designed laptops we've ever tested. The Media Center Edition model features a big wide-screen display, a handheld remote, a DVD burner, and an external box that ties in to your TV signal. With all those features, it's well-equipped to please any user.

Hewlett-Packard
www.hp.com
$1,299 (base model)

BEST GAMING NOTEBOOK
Dell Inspiron XPS

Fragging your opponent was never so much fun as it is with the Inspiron XPS. Dell has designed this laptop specifically for gamers, who can load it with the fastest desktop Pentium 4 processor, a 15.4-inch display, and a 256MB ATI Mobility Radeon 9800 graphics chip that proficiently pumps out the pixels.

Dell Inspiron XPS

Dell • www.dell.com
$2,449 (base model)

Sony VAIO VGN-X505

BEST BUDGET NOTEBOOK
Dell Inspiron 1150

The Inspiron 1150 is Dell's latest contribution to affordable and portable computing. Well-equipped to handle your basic business tasks, the base model starts at $899. Even with modest upgrades to the processor, display, memory, and hard drive, the Inspiron 1150 is still a great bargain for budget buyers.

Dell • www.dell.com
$899 (base model)

BEST THIN-AND-LIGHT NOTEBOOK
IBM ThinkPad T42

Even configured with a 15-inch screen, this ThinkPad weighs just 5.7 pounds and measures 1.3x13x10.6 inches. And with a wallet-pleasing under-$2,000 price in its base configuration, the ThinkPad T42 is perhaps the best value among laptops equipped with Intel's latest Pentium M processor.

IBM • www.ibm.com
$1,499 (base model)

BEST ULTRAPORTABLE
Sony VAIO PCG-TR3A

The trinity for ultraportables is superlight weight, long battery life, and easy connectivity. The VAIO PCG-TR3A fulfills each requirement, and then some. Just 3.1 pounds, the notebook still packs in a 1GHz Pentium M processor and an integrated DVD/CD-RW combo drive, and you can add Wi-Fi wireless networking.

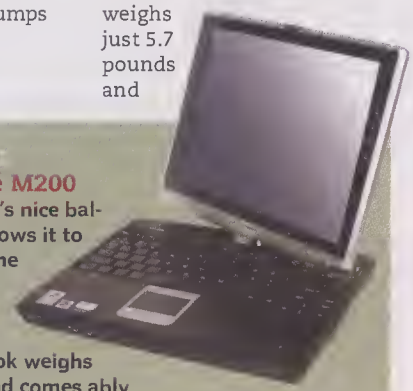
Sony Electronics
www.sonystyle.com
$2,199 (base model)

BEST-DESIGNED NOTEBOOK
Sony VAIO VGN-X505

Finally, a notebook PC as thin as an actual notebook. The VAIO VGN-X505 averages about half an inch thick and weighs a mind-blowingly light 1.9 pounds. Somehow, it still manages to house a 1.1GHz Pentium M processor, 512MB of RAM, and a 20GB hard drive.

Sony Electronics
www.sonystyle.com
$2,999 (base model)

BEST TABLET PC
Toshiba Portégé M200



The Portégé M200's nice balance of features allows it to successfully walk the line between ultraportable notebook and tablet PC. This convertible notebook weighs only 4.4 pounds and comes ably equipped with a 1.5GHz to 2GHz Pentium M processor, a Wi-Fi adapter, up to 2GB of DDR memory, and a 40GB to 80GB hard drive.

Toshiba America
www.toshiba.com • $1,776 (base model)

MOBILE PRODUCTS

BEST PORTABLE HARD DRIVE
LaCie Data Bank USB 2.0 & FireWire

The Data Bank portable hard drive isn't the sleekest design we've seen, but it's an eminently pocketable way to carry 40GB. The $329 hot-pluggable drive weighs 4.8 ounces and draws its power from included USB 2.0 and FireWire cables. A 20GB version is also available.

LaCie
www.lacie.com • $329

BEST CELL PHONE
Motorola A630

Motorola's lilliputian mobile doesn't try to be all things to all people—and that's exactly what it does right. Guaranteed to elicit cell-phone envy, the A630's hidden keyboard will satisfy text-messaging addicts.

Motorola
www.motorola.com • $249

Motorola A630

BEST WI-FI PC CARD
Netgear WG511T 108 Mbps Wireless PC Card

There are three reasons you should consider Netgear's 802.11g-based WG511T if you're shopping for a wireless-networking adapter: It's easy to use, it's fast, and it delivers the best range we've seen to date in a PC Card adapter.

Netgear
www.netgear.com • $71.49

BEST FLASH-BASED MUSIC PLAYER
Creative Labs MuVo TX FM 256MB

The tiny flash-based MuVo TX FM is good for 4 hours of con-

tinuous playback, making it a great gym companion. Throw in great sound, an FM tuner, and MP3 and secure WMA compatibility, and you have a winning audio device.
Creative Labs
us.creative.com • $149.99

BEST HARD DRIVE-BASED MUSIC PLAYER
Apple iPod 40GB

We have always loved this elegantly designed digital music player. Its new refinements include an intuitive Click Wheel (as seen on the iPod Mini), vastly improved battery life, and lower pricing—all of which make the iPod more attractive than ever.
Apple Computer
www.apple.com • $399

BEST POCKET PC HANDHELD
Dell Axim X30 (624MHz)

The high-end Axim X30 sets a new standard for Pocket PCs. In addition to Intel's zippy new 624MHz processor and the latest Windows Mobile OS, the Axim X30 also offers Wi-Fi and Bluetooth wireless-connectivity options. Plus, it's powered by a handy removable, rechargeable battery.
Dell • www.dell.com • $349

BEST BUDGET HANDHELD
PalmOne Tungsten E

With an affordable price and a sleek design, the Tungsten E will hit the handheld sweet spot for many. It can also play digital audio and video files to get you through those extra-long business meetings.
PalmOne
www.palmone.com • $199

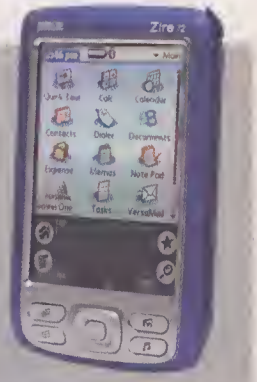
BEST SMARTPHONE
Sony Ericsson P900

The P900, the successor to the P800, is slimmer and lighter, and has pumped-up features, such as more memory and a 65,536-color touch-screen display. You can also use the phone to send e-mail and sync with Microsoft Outlook.
Sony Ericsson
www.sonyericsson.com
$799.99

Apple iPod 40GB

BEST PALM OS HANDHELD
PalmOne Zire 72

The Zire 72's eye-catching blue design and expansive multimedia capabilities—including the ability to listen to music and watch videos—will appeal to users who want a device that can get the work done but still leaves room for fun.
PalmOne
www.palmone.com • $299



BEST USB MEMORY DEVICE
SwissMemory USB

A truly sharp approach to flash storage: The SwissMemory USB combines 64MB or 128MB of removable flash memory with all the tools that have made Victorinox's Swiss Army Knives synonymous with multitasking.
Victorinox
www.victorinox.com
$63.95 (64MB)

BEST PORTABLE SNAPSHOT PRINTER
Canon CP-300 Card Photo Printer

With its own battery for printing on the go, the CP-300 is the most compact and neatly designed snapshot printer around. This 2.2x6.7x4.8-inch dye sub briskly shoots out good-looking postcard-size prints.
Canon U.S.A.
usa.canon.com • $279

BEST HEADPHONES
Etymotic ER-6 Isolator Earphones

The name Etymotic means "true to the ear," and we are inclined to agree. Designed to offer performance and features similar to those of pricier models, the ER-6 Isolator earbud-style headphones deliver excellent sound in din-heavy environments.
Etymotic Research
www.etymotic.com • $139

BEST GPS DEVICE
Garmin StreetPilot 2620

The StreetPilot 2620 is an amazing stand-alone GPS unit ideal for the directionally challenged. With its 20GB hard drive, built-in antenna, color touch screen, and external speaker, it offers close-to-flawless turn-by-turn directions and more than 5 million points of interest, right out of the box.
Garmin
www.garmin.com • $1,516

BEST PORTABLE GAMING DEVICE
Tapwave Zodiac 2

New gaming devices from Sony (PlayStation Portable) and Nintendo (DS) are on the horizon, but right now, the 128MB Zodiac 2, with its sharp 480x320-pixel color screen and ATI handheld graphics accelerator, is the best portable-gaming option available.
Tapwave
www.tapwave.com • $399.99

Tapwave Zodiac 2

HARDWARE

BEST LASER PRINTER
Brother HL-5140

The Brother HL-5140 has the same square design as the HL-5040 it replaces but prints much faster, thanks in part to more onboard memory. With speed and expandability, this model is an excellent choice for your small business or home office.

Brother Industries
www.brother.com • $199.99

BEST COLOR LASER PRINTER
Lexmark C510

For small businesses needing a color-and-monochrome workgroup laser, the Lexmark C510 is a wise investment. This printer offers true PostScript and Printer Control Language (PCL) 6 emulation, so color presentations look great. Plus, the C510 pumps out up to 19 pages per minute of monochrome text—and sells for well less than $1,000.

Lexmark International
www.lexmark.com • $619

BEST ALL-IN-ONE PRINTER
HP OfficeJet 4215 All-In-One

The OfficeJet 4215 isn't the speediest multifunction printer (MFP) on the market, but it produces high-quality printed, copied, and scanned output. Add in great software and support, and you have an affordable, high-quality MFP perfect for home or office.

Hewlett-Packard
www.hp.com • $149.99

BEST CRT MONITOR
NEC MultiSync FE2111SB

A 22-inch CRT display with a maximum resolution of 1,920x1,440 pixels, the MultiSync FE2111SB uses an aperture grille that produces a brighter image than most shadow-mask CRTs. It's a great CRT choice for gamers or graphics pros.

NEC-Mitsubishi Electronics
www.necmitsubishi.com
$599.99

BEST 15-INCH LCD
IBM ThinkVision L150p

The slim, matte-black bezel of IBM's ThinkVision L150p has the clean lines of an expensive suit. It offers more than just looks, though—good image quality, analog and digital inputs, and a handful of adjustability features are also part of the package.

IBM • www.ibm.com • $389

BEST 17-INCH LCD
Samsung SyncMaster 172X

Samsung's SyncMaster 172X was one of the first LCDs on the market with a blazing 12-millisecond response time, ably handling fast-moving game backgrounds and detailed movie scenes better than other LCDs. It also offers a stylish, intelligent design and picture quality that will satisfy all but the most demanding users.

Samsung
www.samsung.com • $559

BEST INKJET PRINTER
Canon i560

Fast speeds and outstanding text and photo printing make the Canon i560 our favorite inkjet printer. This model also supports photo printing without a PC, and it can be had for under $100.

Canon U.S.A. • usa.canon.com • $89.99

BEST 19-INCH LCD
NEC AccuSync LCD9V

Despite its affordable price, you won't be getting any old budget panel with the AccuSync LCD9V. The pleasant design and exceptional image quality of this 19-incher make it one of the most eye-catching displays around.

NEC-Mitsubishi Electronics
www.necmitsubishi.com
$704.99

BEST BUDGET DIGITAL CAMERA
Canon PowerShot A75

For a low price you get a lot of camera with the 3.2-megapixel PowerShot A75. A 3x optical zoom and above-average image quality are bolstered by a large LCD, good autofocus, and handy scene presets. To top it off, a burst mode clicks off 11 frames in less than 6 seconds.

Canon U.S.A.
usa.canon.com • $249.99

BEST MIDRANGE DIGITAL CAMERA
Canon PowerShot S1 IS

With the 3.2-megapixel PowerShot S1 IS, Canon takes the appeal of a 10x zoom lens one step further with optical image stabilization. The S1 IS also has a strong enthusiast-oriented feature set, with excellent movie capture, manual exposure control, and solid image quality to add to its attractive styling.

Canon U.S.A.
usa.canon.com • $399

BEST HIGH-END CONSUMER DIGITAL CAMERA
Nikon D70

With a solid and well-designed body, intelligently implemented features, speedy performance, and impressive photo quality, the 6-megapixel Nikon D70 digital SLR delivers an as-yet-unmatched digital-photography experience for the enthusiast. It easily outshoots its competition.

Nikon • www.nikonusa.com
$999 (body only);
$1,299 (with lens)

BEST ULTRA-COMPACT CAMERA
Konica Minolta DiMage Xg

The fifth addition to the ultracompact DiMage X line, complete with its signature internally zooming lens, the 3-megapixel DiMage Xg is both quick and versatile, making for an excellent tote-and-snap companion. Take photos, capture 320x240-pixel video clips, or use it as a Webcam. It doubles as a voice recorder, too.

Konica Minolta
www.konicaminolta.com
$299.99

BEST BUDGET DIGITAL CAMCORDER
Sony MiniDV Handycam DCR-HC40

The DCR-HC40 combines 690,000-pixel video resolution, 1-megapixel photo resolution, and a 10x Carl Zeiss zoom lens with a nice feature set. Though it lacks a broad focal range, its night-shooting prowess and touch-screen LCD add pizzazz. It's a capable and reasonably priced, yet highly portable, camcorder.

Sony Electronics
www.sonystyle.com • $599

Nikon D70

CONTINUED ON PAGE 104

"Easy Media Creator 7.0 offers the most comprehensive and well integrated suite of CD- and DVD-burning tools on the market."
CNET Editors' Choice – March 4, 2004

Organize, edit, create, burn, and share everything digital on CD or DVD

Do it all. Show it off.

Delivers more fun, does more stuff, and wins more industry awards – that's Roxio Easy Media Creator™ 7, the most powerful and easy-to-use digital media suite. Roxio's PhotoSuite® 7, VideoWave® 7, Napster® 2.0, and Easy CD & DVD Creator™ 7 work together seamlessly within this exceptionally compatible and fully integrated product that lets you do everything imaginable with your music, photos, video, and data. Just add an Intel processor-based PC and you can rip, play, enhance, and preserve everything digital on CD or DVD with this #1 selling suite.

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April 6, 2004
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Roxio, Inc.

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Sager

Offering Increased Productivity and Unrivaled Gaming Capability –

The perfect alternative to your desktop system

NP 9860 FEATURES

- NVIDIA® GeForce™ Go 6800 PCI-Express™ Graphics Module with 256MB DDR2 Memory delivers new levels of performance, and the most vibrant, life-like graphics ever experienced on a mobile PC.
- Dual Channel DDR2 System Memory supports 400/533MHz, provides the best match for Intel® Processors and enables power efficiencies for data intensive business, multimedia, and gaming applications.
- Dual Optical Device bays allow this system to be customized with 2 CD-ROM devices for fast backup.
- The front panel Audio DJ CD player control with separate power switch lets you play your favorite music CD or MP3 while on the go.
- TV Tuner with Multi-Function Remote Control, so you will never miss any of your favorite TV shows again.
- Hardware Raid boosts HDD Speed with Raid 0 or mirror backup your data with Raid 1.
- Built-In Enhanced Digital Video Camera makes video chat and video conferencing easy.
- Virtual Eight channel external audio outputs eliminate the need for a decoder equipped speaker system.

OPTIONS

802.11g Wireless Module
802.11g and Bluetooth Combo Module
Port Replicator

NP 9860V	NP 9860S	NP 9860C
17.0" Wide Viewing Angles WSXGA+ Active Matrix Display with Super Clear Glare Type Screen	17.0" Wide Viewing Angles WSXGA+ Active Matrix Display with Super Clear Glare Type Screen	17.0" Wide Viewing Angles WSXGA+ Active Matrix Display with Super Clear Glare Type Screen
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor with HT Technology Extreme Edition 3.4GHz	Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 560 with HT Technology (3.6GHz, 1MB L2 Cache, 800MHz FSB)	Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 530 with HT Technology (3.0GHz, 1MB L2 Cache, 800MHz FSB)
256MB DDR2 NVIDIA® GeForce™ Go 6800 PCI-Express™ Graphics	256MB DDR2 NVIDIA® GeForce™ Go 6800 PCI-Express™ Graphics	256MB DDR2 NVIDIA® GeForce™ Go 6800 PCI-Express™ Graphics
2048MB Dual Channel DDR2 SDRAM	1024MB Dual Channel DDR2 SDRAM	512MB Dual Channel DDR2 SDRAM
Dual 60.0GB 7200RPM Ultra ATA100 Hard Drives	60.0GB 7200RPM Ultra ATA100 Hard Drive	60.0GB 7200RPM Ultra ATA100 Hard Drive
4X2X8 DVD+-R/RW[1] Dual-Mode Drive	4X2X8 DVD+-R/RW[1] Dual-Mode Drive	8X DVD[2]/24X10X24 CD-RW[3] Combo Drive
Full Size Keyboard with Numeric Keypad	Full Size Keyboard with Numeric Keypad	Full Size Keyboard with Numeric Keypad
Bluetooth and 802.11g/Wi-Fi Wireless (optional)	Bluetooth and 802.11g/Wi-Fi Wireless (optional)	Bluetooth and 802.11g/Wi-Fi Wireless (optional)
Hardware Raid 0,1 Function	Hardware Raid 0,1 Function	Hardware Raid 0,1 Function
Built-In TV Tuner with Remote Control	Built-In TV Tuner with Remote Control	Built-In TV Tuner with Remote Control
Front Panel Audio DJ with Separate Power Switch	Front Panel Audio DJ with Separate Power Switch	Front Panel Audio DJ with Separate Power Switch
Built-In Digital Video Camera	Built-In Digital Video Camera	Built-In Digital Video Camera
Built-In 7-in-1 Card Reader	Built-In 7-in-1 Card Reader	Built-In 7-in-1 Card Reader
4 Built-In Speakers with a Subwoofer	4 Built-In Speakers with a Subwoofer	4 Built-In Speakers with a Subwoofer
Virtual 8 Channel External Speaker Output	Virtual 8 Channel External Speaker Output	Virtual 8 Channel External Speaker Output
External USB 1.44MB Floppy Disk Drive	External USB 1.44MB Floppy Disk Drive	External USB 1.44MB Floppy Disk Drive
On-Board 56K V.90 Modem[4] and 10/100/1000 Ethernet	On-Board 56K V.90 Modem[4] and 10/100/1000 Ethernet	On-Board 56K V.90 Modem[4] and 10/100/1000 Ethernet
3 Hot-Keys for E-Mail, Browser and Applications	3 Hot-Keys for E-Mail, Browser and Applications	3 Hot-Keys for E-Mail, Browser and Applications
Built-In Touchpad Pointing Device with Scrolling Slider	Built-In Touchpad Pointing Device with Scrolling Slider	Built-In Touchpad Pointing Device with Scrolling Slider
1 Type II PCMCIA Slot	1 Type II PCMCIA Slot	1 Type II PCMCIA Slot
Infrared, Wireless Fast IR Interface	Infrared, Wireless Fast IR Interface	Infrared, Wireless Fast IR Interface
HDTV Output Supported	HDTV Output Supported	HDTV Output Supported
2 IEEE 1394a Ports (Mini), 1 DVI, 1 TV-Out Port and 1 S-Video-In Port	2 IEEE 1394a Ports (Mini), 1 DVI, 1 TV-Out Port and 1 S-Video-In Port	2 IEEE 1394a Ports (Mini), 1 DVI, 1 TV-Out Port and 1 S-Video-In Port
Other Ports: 4 USB 2.0 Ports, 1S, 1P and Ext. Keyboard	Other Ports: 4 USB 2.0 Ports, 1S, 1P and Ext. Keyboard	Other Ports: 4 USB 2.0 Ports, 1S, 1P and Ext. Keyboard
High-Performance Smart Lithium-Ion Battery	High-Performance Smart Lithium-Ion Battery	High-Performance Smart Lithium-Ion Battery
Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition	Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition	Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
Weight: 12.5 Lbs with Battery	Weight: 12.5 Lbs with Battery	Weight: 12.5 Lbs with Battery
15.5"w x 11.75"d x 1.95"h	15.5"w x 11.75"d x 1.95"h	15.5"w x 11.75"d x 1.95"h
Sager's Umbrella Protection Policy	Sager's Umbrella Protection Policy	Sager's Umbrella Protection Policy
$4395	**$3195**	**$2695**

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www.sagernotebook.com

The ultimate mobility power!

Packed with leading-edge features normally found only in a desktop, the NP9860 offers flexibility and power beyond regular mobile PCs. The NP9860 features the LGA775 Socket T Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor with HT Technology and also includes Dual Channel DDR2 system memory for maximum bandwidth throughput. For multimedia and gaming fans, the next generation PCI-Express Graphics module design offers unprecedented selection flexibility. The front panel Audio DJ gives you direct control over your CDs and MP3s, and its TV Tuner lets you catch your favorite shows on the go.

Like a theater at your command!

Featuring a stunning 17" Widescreen Display with four-speaker stereo sound plus a powerful subwoofer, Sager's NP4790 delivers the ultimate theater experience on the go.

Anywhere, anytime at your fingertips!

Sager's NP4380 with a Built-In Video Camera gives you the power to hold a video conference, take a quick snapshot on the job site for your records or send a quick video clip to anyone around the globe. Establish a connection to communicate in every possible way anywhere with a Wi-Fi (802.11b), V.90 56k Modem, LAN (RJ45) and IRDA.

NP 4790V

- 17.0" Wide Viewing Angles WSXGA+ Active Matrix Display with Super Clear Glare Type Screen
- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 3.2E GHz with 800MHz FSB
- 128MB DDR ATI MOBILITY™ RADEON™ 9700 AGP 8X Graphics
- 1024MB PC3200 (400MHz) DDR SDRAM
- 60.0GB 7200RPM Ultra ATA100 Hard Drive
- 4X2X8 DVD+-R/RW[1] Dual-Mode Drive
- Full Size Keyboard with Numeric Keypad
- Built-In Digital Video Camera
- Built-In TV Tuner with Remote (optional)
- On-Board S6K V.90 Modem[4] and 10/100/1000 Ethernet
- Built-In 7-in-1 Card Reader
- 4 Built-In Speakers with a Subwoofer
- 6 Channel External Speaker Output
- 2 USB 2.0 Ports
- 3 Hot-Keys for E-Mail, Browser and Applications
- Built-In Touchpad Pointing Device with Scrolling Keys
- 1 Type II PCMCIA Slot
- Infrared, Wireless Fast IR Interface
- 1 IEEE 1394 Port (Mini), 1 TV-Out Port and 1 S-Video-In Port
- Other Ports: 15, 1P, Ext. Keyboard and Ext. CRT
- High-Performance Smart Lithium-Ion Battery
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- Weight: 9.35 Lbs with Battery
- 15.5"w x 10.75"d x 1.7"h
- Sager's Umbrella Protection Policy

$2290

NP 4790C

- 17.0" Wide Viewing Angles WSXGA+ Active Matrix Display with Super Clear Glare Type Screen
- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 3.0E GHz with 800MHz FSB
- 128MB DDR ATI MOBILITY™ RADEON™ 9700 AGP 8X Graphics
- 512MB PC3200 (400MHz) DDR SDRAM
- 60.0GB S4DDRPM Ultra ATA100 Hard Drive
- 8X DVD[2]/24X10X24 CD-RW[3] Combo Drive
- Full Size Keyboard with Numeric Keypad
- Built-In Digital Video Camera
- Built-In TV Tuner with Remote (optional)
- On-Board S6K V.90 Modem[4] and 10/100/1000 Ethernet
- Built-In 7-in-1 Card Reader
- 4 Built-In Speakers with a Subwoofer
- 6 Channel External Speaker Output
- 2 USB 2.0 Ports
- 3 Hot-Keys for E-Mail, Browser and Applications
- Built-In Touchpad Pointing Device with Scrolling Keys
- 1 Type II PCMCIA Slot
- Infrared, Wireless Fast IR Interface
- 1 IEEE 1394 Port (Mini), 1 TV-Out Port and 1 S-Video-In Port
- Other Ports: 15, 1P, Ext. Keyboard and Ext. CRT
- High-Performance Smart Lithium-Ion Battery
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- Weight: 9.35 Lbs with Battery
- 15.5"w x 10.75"d x 1.7"h
- Sager's Umbrella Protection Policy

$1945

NP 4380C

- 15.0" SXGA+ Active Matrix Display
- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 3.0GHz with 800MHz FSB
- 128MB DDR ATI MOBILITY™ RADEON™ 9700 AGP 8X Graphics
- 512MB PC3200 (400MHz) DDR SDRAM
- 40.0GB Ultra ATA100 Hard Drive
- 8X DVD[2]/24x10x24 CD-RW[3] Combo Drive
- Built-In Digital Video Camera
- Built-In 7-in-1 Card Reader
- On-Board S6K V.90 Modem[4] and 10/100/100D Ethernet
- 3 Hot-Keys for E-Mail, Browser and Applications
- 6 Channel External Speaker Output
- 2 USB 2.0 Ports
- Built-In Touchpad Pointing Device with Scrolling Keys
- 1 Type II PCMCIA Slot
- Infrared, Wireless Fast IR Interface
- 1 IEEE 1394 Port (Mini) and 1 TV-Out Port
- Other Ports: 15, 1P, Ext. Keyboard and Ext. CRT
- High-Performance Smart Lithium-Ion Battery
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- Weight: 7.5 Lbs with Battery
- 13"w x 10.75"d x 1.7"h
- Sager's Umbrella Protection Policy

$1495

NP4790 FEATURES

- 17.0" 1680 x 1050 resolution widescreen display offers greater working space and boosts multimedia enjoyment.
- Full Size Keyboard with Numeric Keypad provides a pleasant typing environment.
- Built-In Digital Video Camera makes video chat and video conferencing easy.
- Built-In 7-in-1 Card Reader provides the fastest and easiest way to transfer your data.
- Enhanced 4-speaker stereo sound system with a powerful subwoofer.

OPTIONS

802.11b Wireless Module
TV Tuner with Remote Control
Port Replicator

intel inside pentium 4

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SAGER
THE PORTABLE POWER PEOPLE

High-Performance

Configured for Power and Mobility

Consistently on the cutting edge!

Sager's NP5690 boasts an Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor with Hyper-Threading Technology, 400MHz Dual Channel DDR Memory, front panel Audio DJ, Dual Smart Bays, the powerful ATI MOBILITY™ RADEON™ 9700 and an optional second battery pack that extends system usage time! Check out the specifications, and include Sager's Umbrella Protection Policy and you've found an amazing notebook.

The complete Mobile Office UNWIRED!

Built from the ground up for mobility, the NP3790 with Intel® Centrino™ mobile technology brings you new freedom and flexibility. Experience wireless freedom with integrated 802.11g Wireless LAN, and outstanding mobile performance powered by the Intel® Pentium® M Processor. The NP3790 also features the powerful ATI MOBILITY™ RADEON™ 9700 3D graphics controller and four built-in stereo speakers – this is a truly ideal notebook for both productivity and entertainment.

Stylish and sophisticated!

Sager will outfit your mobile computing in style with the sleek NP1280. Beneath the polished high gloss blue cover with silver particles lays a gorgeous 12.1" widescreen WXGA display complete with a digital video camera. Powered by Intel® Centrino™ mobile technology, the NP1280 brings all the mobile performance and wireless connectivity you demand. Best of all, the standard 8 cell battery gives you that extra juice you need on the go.

NP5690 FEATURES

- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor with Hyper-Threading Technology and Max 2048MB PC3200 (400MHz) Dual Channel DDR system memory give you better performance than you've ever dreamed of.
- Powerful ATI MOBILITY™ RADEON™ 9700 with 128MB DDR Memory brings your pictures to life on the high-contrast LCD screen.
- Dual Smart Bays (one fixed/one versatile) allow this system to be customized just the way you want it. An optional second battery extends the run time, secondary HDD for extra storage capacity, 6-in-1 Card Reader for your digital media or an additional CD-ROM device installed for backup.
- The front panel Audio DJ CD player control with separate power switch lets you play your favorite music CD while on the go or relaxing in the office.
- Using optical SPDIF output (5.1CH for DVD movies) combined with the TV-out port you can watch DVDs on long trips or hook right into your home theater system.

OPTIONS

802.11g Wireless Module
Secondary Battery
Secondary Hard Disk Drive
6-in-1 Card Reader
Port Replicator

NP 5690V	NP 5690S	NP 5690C
15.0" High-Contrast UXGA Active Matrix Display featuring Super-Wide Viewing Angles	15.0" High-Contrast UXGA Active Matrix Display featuring Super-Wide Viewing Angles	15.0" SXGA+ Active Matrix Display
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor with HT Technology 3.4GHz	Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor with HT Technology 3.0GHz	Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor with HT Technology 3.0GHz
128MB DDR ATI MOBILITY™ RADEON™ 9700 AGP 8X Graphics	128MB DDR ATI MOBILITY™ RADEON™ 9700 AGP 8X Graphics	128MB DDR ATI MOBILITY™ RADEON™ 9700 AGP 8X Graphics
512MB PC3200 Dual Channel DDR SDRAM	512MB PC3200 Dual Channel DDR SDRAM	512MB PC3200 Dual Channel DDR SDRAM
60.0GB 7200RPM Ultra ATA100 Hard Drive	60.0GB 5400RPM Ultra ATA100 Hard Drive	40.0GB Ultra ATA100 Hard Drive
4X2X8 DVD+-R/RW[1] Dual-Mode Drive	8X DVD[2]/24x10x24 CD-RW[3] Combo Drive	8X DVD[2]/24x10x24 CD-RW[3] Combo Drive
Front Panel Audio DJ with Separate Power Switch	Front Panel Audio DJ with Separate Power Switch	Front Panel Audio DJ with Separate Power Switch
On-Board 56K V.90 Modem[4] and 10/100/1000 Ethernet	On-Board 56K V.90 Modem[4] and 10/100/1000 Ethernet	On-Board 56K V.90 Modem[4] and 10/100/1000 Ethernet
4 USB 2.0 Ports	4 USB 2.0 Ports	4 USB 2.0 Ports
3.5" Removable 1.44MB FDD Exchangeable with Optional 2nd Battery/CD/CD-RW/DVD/HDD Drive	3.5" Removable 1.44MB FDD Exchangeable with Optional 2nd Battery/CD/CD-RW/DVD/HDD Drive	3.5" Removable 1.44MB FDD Exchangeable with Optional 2nd Battery/CD/CD-RW/DVD/HDD Drive
3D Surround Sound (SPDIF 5.1CH Output for DVD)	3D Surround Sound (SPDIF 5.1CH Output for DVD)	3D Surround Sound (SPDIF 5.1CH Output for DVD)
Built-In Touchpad Pointing Device with Scrolling Keys	Built-In Touchpad Pointing Device with Scrolling Keys	Built-In Touchpad Pointing Device with Scrolling Keys
1 Type II PCMCIA Slot	1 Type II PCMCIA Slot	1 Type II PCMCIA Slot
Infrared, Wireless Fast IR Interface	Infrared, Wireless Fast IR Interface	Infrared, Wireless Fast IR Interface
1 IEEE-1394 Port (Mini) and 1 TV-Out Port	1 IEEE-1394 Port (Mini) and 1 TV-Out Port	1 IEEE-1394 Port (Mini) and 1 TV-Out Port
Other Ports: 1P, Ext. Keyboard and Ext. CRT	Other Ports: 1P, Ext. Keyboard and Ext. CRT	Other Ports: 1P, Ext. Keyboard and Ext. CRT
High-Performance Smart Lithium-Ion Battery	High-Performance Smart Lithium-Ion Battery	High-Performance Smart Lithium-Ion Battery
Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition	Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition	Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
Weight: 9.65 lbs with Battery	Weight: 9.65 lbs with Battery	Weight: 9.65 lbs with Battery
13"w x 11.4"d x 1.7"h	13"w x 11.4"d x 1.7"h	13"w x 11.4"d x 1.7"h
Sager's Umbrella Protection Policy	Sager's Umbrella Protection Policy	Sager's Umbrella Protection Policy
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  - Intel® Pentium® M Processor 735 (1.7DGHz, 2MB L2 Cache, 4DDMHz F5B)
  - Intel® PRO/Wireless 22DDBG LAN BD2.11b/g
- 12BMB DDR ATI MOBILITY™ RADEON™ 97DD AGP BX Graphics
- 512MB PC27DD (333MHz) DDR 5DRAM
- 60.0GB 54DDRPM Ultra ATA100 Hard Drive
- BX DVD[2]/24X1DX24 CD-RW[3] Combo Drive
- Built-In Digital Video Camera
- On-Board 56K V.9D Modem[4] and 10/100/10DD Ethernet
- Built-In 4-in-1 Card Reader
- 2 Hot-Keys for E-Mail and Web Browser
- 3 USB 2.0 Ports
- 4 Built-In Stereo Speakers
- 3D Surround Sound (SPDIF S.1CH Output for DVD)
- Built-In Touchpad Pointing Device with Scrolling Keys
- 1 Type II PCMCIA Slot
- 1 IEEE-1394 Port (Mini) and 1 TV-Out Port
- Other Ports: 1S and Ext. CRT
- High-Performance Smart Lithium-Ion Battery
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- Weight: 6.6 lbs with Battery
- 14.12S"w x 1D.S"d x 1.S"h
- Sager's Umbrella Protection Policy

$1795

NP 3790C

- 15.4" W5XGA+ Active Matrix Display
- Intel® Centrino™ mobile technology
  - Intel® Pentium® M Processor 715 (1.5DGHz, 2MB L2 Cache, 400MHz F5B)
  - Intel® PRO/Wireless 220DBG LAN B02.11b/g
- 12BMB DDR ATI MOBILITY™ RADEON™ 9700 AGP BX Graphics
- 256MB PC2700 (333MHz) DDR 5DRAM
- 4D.DGB Ultra ATA100 Hard Drive
- BX DVD[2]/24X10X24 CD-RW[3] Combo Drive
- Built-In Digital Video Camera
- On-Board 56K V.90 Modem[4] and 1D/1D0/1000 Ethernet
- Built-In 4-in-1 Card Reader
- 2 Hot-Keys for E-Mail and Web Browser
- 3 USB 2.D Ports
- 4 Built-In Stereo Speakers
- 3D Surround Sound (SPDIF S.1CH Output for DVD)
- Built-In Touchpad Pointing Device with Scrolling Keys
- 1 Type II PCMCIA Slot
- 1 IEEE-1394 Port (Mini) and 1 TV-Out Port
- Other Ports: 1S and Ext. CRT
- High-Performance Smart Lithium-Ion Battery
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- Weight: 6.6 lbs with Battery
- 14.12S"w x 1D.S"d x 1.S"h
- Sager's Umbrella Protection Policy

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NP 1280C

- 12.1" WXGA Active Matrix Display
- Intel® Centrino™ mobile technology
  - Intel® Pentium® M Processor 715 (1.5DGHz, 2MB L2 Cache, 400MHz F5B)
  - Intel® PRO/Wireless 2200BG LAN 802.11b/g
- Integrated Intel® Extreme Graphics 2 with up to 64MB Shared Memory
- 256MB PC27DD (333MHz) DDR 5DRAM
- 40.0GB Ultra DMA Hard Drive
- 8X DVD[2]/24X10X24 CD-RW[3] Combo Drive
- Built-In Digital Video Camera
- On-Board 56K V.90 Modem[4] and 10/100 Ethernet
- 2 USB 2.D Ports
- Built-In Touchpad Pointing Device with Cold Cathode Light
- 1 Type II PCMCIA Slot
- Infrared, Wireless Fast IR Interface
- Other Ports: Ext. CRT
- High-Performance Smart Lithium-Ion Battery
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- Weight: S.2 Lbs with Battery
- 12.32"w x 1D.743"d x 1.D"h
- Sager's Umbrella Protection Policy

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NP3790 FEATURES

- ATI MOBILITY™ RADEON™ 9700 with 128MB DDR delivers cutting-edge performance for 3D gaming and multimedia business applications.
- Built-In Digital Video Camera makes video chat and video conferencing easy.
- Built-In 4-in-1 Card Reader supports SD/MMC/MS/MS Pro provides the fastest and easiest way to transfer your digital media.

NP1280 FEATURES

- 12.1" 12B0 x B00 resolution widescreen display offers greater working space and boosts multimedia enjoyment.
- Built-In Digital Video Camera makes video chat and video conferencing easy.
- Communication on-the-go with integrated B02.11g Wireless LAN, V.90 fax/data Modem and 10/100 LAN.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 98

BEST MIDRANGE DIGITAL CAMCORDER
Canon Optura 30

In addition to capturing 2.2-megapixel stills to an SD card, the Optura 30 can record 320x240-mode video for Web use. Its 12x zoom lens works well even in high-contrast situations. Its affordability, user-friendly controls, and fine image quality make it a great vacation camcorder.

Canon U.S.A.
usa.canon.com • $899

BEST ULTRACOMPACT DIGITAL CAMCORDER
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The Optura 300 is so compact you could slip it into your pocket, spend all day shooting, and never feel weighed down. But don't be fooled by the small size. This camcorder delivers both solid video and great 2-megapixel still photos, making it an extremely attractive option for your moviemaking.

Canon U.S.A.
usa.canon.com • $729

BEST MOTHERBOARD
Asus A8V Deluxe

Good enough to be chosen as the foundation of our Dream PC in the October issue, the Asus A8V Deluxe is one of the first motherboards to support AMD's Athlon 64 processor. Its highly integrated design includes dual-channel-memory support, four Serial ATA channels, Gigabit Ethernet, and integrated Wi-Fi (802.11g) wireless networking.

Asus Computer
www.asus.com • $145

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Lite-On IT • www.liteonamericas.com • $49.99

BEST DVD-REWRITABLE DRIVE
Lite-On SOHW-832S

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Lite-On IT • www.liteonamericas.com • $129.99

BEST SOUND CARD
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The Audigy 2 ZS Platinum Pro is Creative's most capable audio-output device to date. The card's highlights include 7.1-channel output, high audio resolution, support for advanced home-audio standards, and the inclusion of an external I/O hub with so many ports that you can send or receive audio from just about any component you own.

Creative Labs
us.creative.com • $249.99

NEC AccuSync LCD9V

Logitech Z-680

BEST DIGITAL AUDIO RECEIVER
Creative Labs Sound Blaster Wireless Music

The Sound Blaster Wireless Music sends MP3s and other tunes to your stereo using wireless 802.11b networking, and—perhaps even more important—it comes with a big remote control that works well for navigating your PC's music from a comfortable location like your couch.

Creative Labs
us.creative.com • $199.99

BEST 2.1-CHANNEL SPEAKER SYSTEM
Altec Lansing FX6021

The Altec Lansing FX6021 speaker system is as easy on the eyes as it is on the ears. The look of this three-piece set will complement any PC, and the sound generated from its 75 watts is as good as many larger models can produce.

Altec Lansing
www.altecmm.com • $229.99

BEST MULTICHANNEL SPEAKER SYSTEM
Logitech Z-680

Logitech's flagship Z-680 comprises four identical satellites, a center speaker, and a ported subwoofer. Although the Z-680 is designed for PCs and game consoles, its powerful sound, standard speaker-wire connectors, and wall-mountable stands make it a great candidate for small home theaters, as well.

Logitech
www.logitech.com • $399.95

BEST WIRELESS-NETWORKING DEVICE
Buffalo WRB-G54K

Buffalo's WRB-G54K router-and-repeater kit is great for large homes or offices that need a wireless network with room to grow and range to spare. Plus, it's preconfigured to work right out of the box, so the most complicated part of setup is taken care of before you even use the units.

Buffalo Technologies
www.buffalotech.com
$149.99

BEST BUDGET GRAPHICS CARD
ATI Radeon 9600 SE

You don't have to be on the cutting edge to have a fun and functional PC. With DVI, VGA, and S-Video outputs, as well as DirectX 9 support, the ATI Radeon 9600 SE is an affordable way to add modest gaming and 3D-graphics capabilities to your PC.

ATI Technologies
www.ati.com • $129

BEST MAINSTREAM GRAPHICS CARD
ATI All-In-Wonder 9600 XT

The 128MB All-In-Wonder 9600 XT can run most modern games, and, on top of that, provides a TV tuner, an FM radio receiver, TiVo-like DVR capabilities, and a handy remote control, effectively turning your PC into an entertainment center.

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www.ati.com • $249

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- Upgradable to Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor at 3.40GHz with 800MHz Front Side Bus
- 512MB ECC DDR2 SDRAM (Up to 8GB)
- 36GB[64] (10,000 RPM) Ultra320 SCSI Hard Drive
- Upgradable to 876GB[64] Internal Storage Capacity
- Three PCI Slots: 3 PCI-x 64/133MHz
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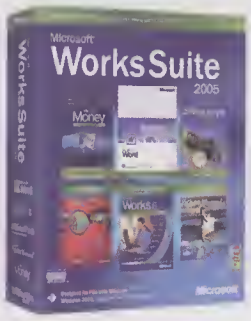

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Patrick M. Kolla
safer-networking.org • Free

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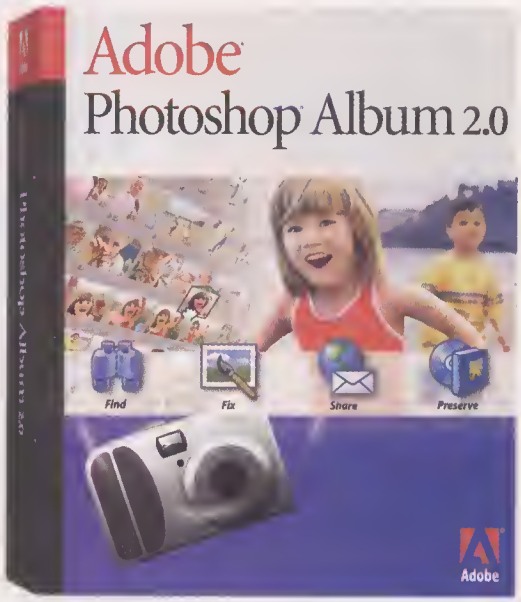
Ulead VideoStudio 8 is a must-see for budding moviemakers.



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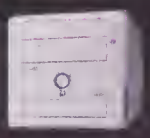
EY65/ EY18
- EY65: Intel 865G Chipset
- EX18: AMD nForce2-GT Chipset



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Not only does it provide a film studio's worth of editing tools and special effects, but it also has a minimal learning curve and even features a three-step wizard to make videos without manual editing.
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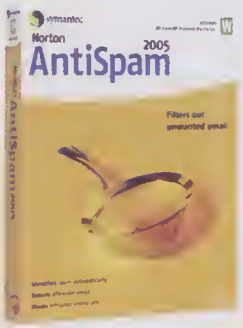
www.lavasoftusa.com • Free



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Apple Computer
www.apple.com • Free

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With its advanced tools and streamlined interface, budget-price Paint Shop Pro 8 could nearly give Photoshop a challenge. By the time you read this, version 9 will be offering RAW-file support and a new Mixer palette.
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www.jasc.com • $109

BEST PROFESSIONAL IMAGE-EDITING SOFTWARE
Adobe Photoshop CS
Photoshop easily retains its position as the essential image-editing tool for graphics professionals. New capabilities include increased support for 16-bit images, better color-correction and image-adjustment tools, and the ability to edit text on a path.
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As far as we're concerned, there's really no other way to search. In addition to delivering accurate results fast, Google now provides a local-address feature, Google Local **(local.google.com)**, that has us using our Yellow Pages as doorstops. (See the feature "30 Searching Secrets" in this issue for more information.)
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We've always preferred Shutterfly as the online service to go to for digital-image printing, as the site is brimming with cool features. Print quality is also among the best we've seen, and we're really excited by the new, lower price of 29 cents per 4x6-inch print.
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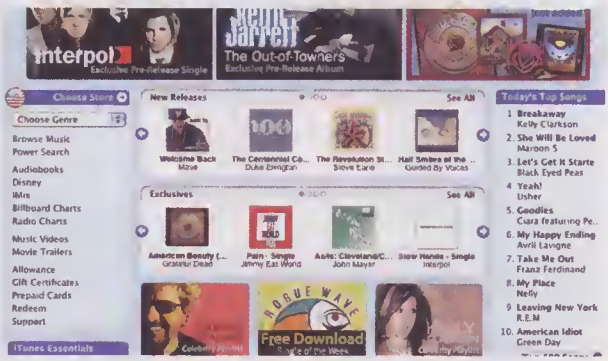

Apple iTunes Music Store

Netflix

detailed directions and maps.
Vindigo • www.vindigo.com
$24.95 per year/$3.50 per month (PDA); price varies by carrier for mobile phones

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mail.yahoo.com • Free

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Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) is finally a truly viable alternative to traditional phone service. Vonage's easy setup, wealth of features, and excellent call quality make it our pick for king of the Internet phone services.
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How great is this? Netflix lets you borrow an unlimited number of movies per month (three at a time) and keep them as long as you please. Return one and get the next one on your list shipped fast and free.
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GAMES

BEST ACTION/ADVENTURE GAME
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Far Cry, possibly the best solo shoot-'em-up since the epic Half-Life, has the most advanced graphics of any PC game to date. This tropical-themed actioner demands all your hardware's muscle, but it's worth it—it's one nonstop adrenaline rush.
Ubisoft Entertainment
www.ubi.com • $39.99

BEST SIMULATION GAME
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Let your inner Steinbrenner run free. With realistic performance and an editor that lets you tweak player ratings, this text-based baseball-management simulation delivers an unmatched feeling of front-office authenticity.
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www.ootpbb.com • $34.95

BEST FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER
Unreal Tournament 2004
The third (and best) installment in the popular Unreal Tournament series, this multiplayer-focused shooter features great graphics, crisp control, and smooth online gameplay. This is the collaborative shootfest by which all others are measured.
Atari
www.atari.com • $39.99

BEST SPORTS GAME
World Soccer Winning Eleven 7 International
Realism is the name of this game. With beautifully rendered stadiums and players, plus impeccable gameplay, Winning Eleven 7 proves that virtual soccer is very much alive and kicking.
Vivendi Universal Games
www.vugames.com • $19.99

BEST STRATEGY GAME
Ground Control II: Operation Exodus
With stunning presentation and tense game situations, Ground Control II is 2004's standout for strategy buffs. Its signature feature is a gorgeous 3D engine powerful enough to support large-scale battles and vast, lush-looking maps.
Vivendi Universal Games
www.vugames.com • $49.99

Far Cry

HOME THEATER

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Pioneer PDP-4340HD
Offering solid performance in almost every respect, this 43-inch plasma television outdoes its high-res peers. Sure, it's not cheap, but you can find it much lower than its list price. You'll be rewarded with striking good looks, an excellent array of features, and a superb picture.
Pioneer North America
www.pioneerelectronics.com
$10,500

Pioneer PDP-4340HD

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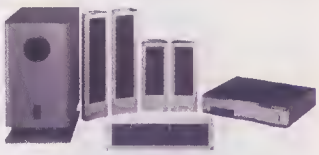
Onkyo's LS-V955 is worth the cost if you care about sound *and* style. This pricey home theater in a box consists of a 5.1-channel combination A/V receiver/DVD player, a full-size powered subwoofer, and five sleek extruded-aluminum speakers.
Onkyo
www.onkyousa.com • $1,000


Onkyo LS-V955

BEST STAND-ALONE DVD RECORDER
Pioneer DVR-810H
The DVR-810H is a near-perfect marriage of an 80GB TiVo-powered hard drive and DVD-recorder functionality. This über-recorder is the best TV-archiving device we've seen to date, and you can find it for much less than its list price.
Pioneer North America
www.pioneerelectronics.com
$1,199

BEST DIGITAL VIDEO RECORDER

TiVo Series2 DVR (40 hours)

The TiVo Series2 digital video recorder (DVR) is almost exactly the same as the original. The software still offers all that great TiVo functionality along with the industry's best program guide, and it includes a host of cool home-networking features as well. A pair of USB ports is all that's been added.

TiVo • www.tivo.com • $199

TiVo Series2 DVR

BEST UNIVERSAL REMOTE CONTROL

Logitech Harmony Remote H659

This remote uploads command codes for all your infrared-controlled gear—televisions, DVRs, DVD players, VCRs, and more—using a Web-based setup wizard. It also has a much better ergonomic design and button layout than its Harmony predecessors. Overall, the H659 hits the sweet spot of design and usability.

Logitech
www.logitech.com • $199.95

Logitech Harmony Remote H659

GADGET OF THE YEAR

Archos Pocket Video Recorder AV420

We hadn't seen the first Windows Portable Media Center players at press time, but there's no guarantee they could beat this outstanding handheld video player. With its robust feature set—including a fantastic screen, VCR-like TV recording (with program guide), and excellent battery life—the AV420 points the way for future handheld entertainment.

Archos • www.archos.com • $549.95

PRODUCT OF THE YEAR

AMD Athlon 64

Okay, we know it was actually launched last year, but this 64-bit CPU really made its mark this year, powering high-end desktops and rivaling Intel processors for benchmark supremacy. And that's just in the 32-bit realm. If Microsoft ever finishes its 64-bit version of Windows and 64-bit applications start launching, watch out.

AMD • www.amd.com • Pricing varies

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- High quality 6-channel audio
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▶ 292

Internet PC DH-300

- Processor AMD 1.8 Ghz
- 256 MB DDR Memory
- 40 GB Hard Drive 7200 RMP
- Integrated 2D/3D Graphics Accelerator
- 18x DVD-ROM with software
- Integrated Sound & Network 10/100
- 1.44 MB Floppy Disk Drive
- 13 Inch Micro ATX Case

BEST VALUE

GAME PC

▶ 1,374

Cube PC CX-780-A

- AMD Athlon™ 64 3200+ Processor 2.0 GHz 1024 KB L2 cache
- 1 GB DDR 400MHz PC3200
- 120GB Serial ATA 7200 rpm
- GeForce NX6800 128 MB, AGP 8x, TV-Out, DVI
- High quality 6-channel audio
- 10/100 Fast Ethernet
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G-Machine DG-940-A

- AMD Athlon™ 64 3200+ Processor 2.0 GHz 1024 KB L2 cache
- 512MB DDR 400MHz PC3200
- 80GB Serial ATA 7200 rpm
- Combo Drive 52x32x52 CD-RW And 16X DVD with software
- 256MB ATI Radeon™ 9550 with TV-Out
- High quality 6-channel audio
- 420W Dual Fan Power Supply

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- Intel Pentium 4 530 w/ HT 3.0GHz 1MB
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- 120GB Serial ATA Hard Drive 7200 Rpm
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- 12x4 / 8x4 DVD ± R/RW / 48x24x48 CD-RW (Lite-On or LG) with software
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- Integrated Gigabit LAN controller

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- 12x4 / 8x4 DVD ± R/RW / 48x24x48 CD-RW (Lite-On or LG) with software
- ATI Radeon™ X800 PRO 256MB
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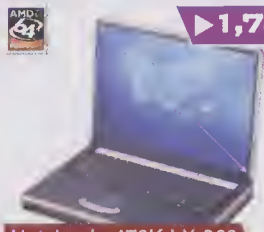

▶ 1,784

Notebook 470K LX-900

- 17" WSXGA+ 1680x1050 Widescreen
- AMD Athlon™ 64 3200+
- 512 MB DDR 400MHz memory
- 128MB ATI Mobility Radeon 9700 PRO
- 60GB Hard Drive (5400 RPM)
- CD-RW /DVD Combo Drive
- 4-in-1 cerd reader & CCD camera

HIGH PERFORMANCE

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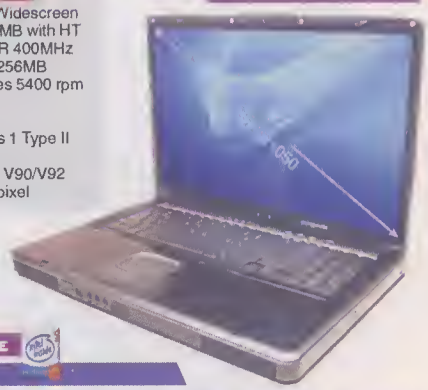
Notebook 870 LX-920

- 17" WSXGA+ 1680x1050 Widescreen
- Intel P4 3.2GHz 800MHz 1MB with HT
- 1024MB Dual Channel DDR 400MHz
- ATI Mobility Radeon 9700 256MB
- 80GB (2x40GB) Hard Drives 5400 rpm
- RAID Level 0 (striping)
- 4x DVD±R / ±RW
- 6-in-1 card reader, Cardbus 1 Type II
- Virtual 6-channels output
- 1 Gigabit/10/100 LAN, 56K V90/V92
- Built-in PC Camera, 300K pixel

▶ 2,381



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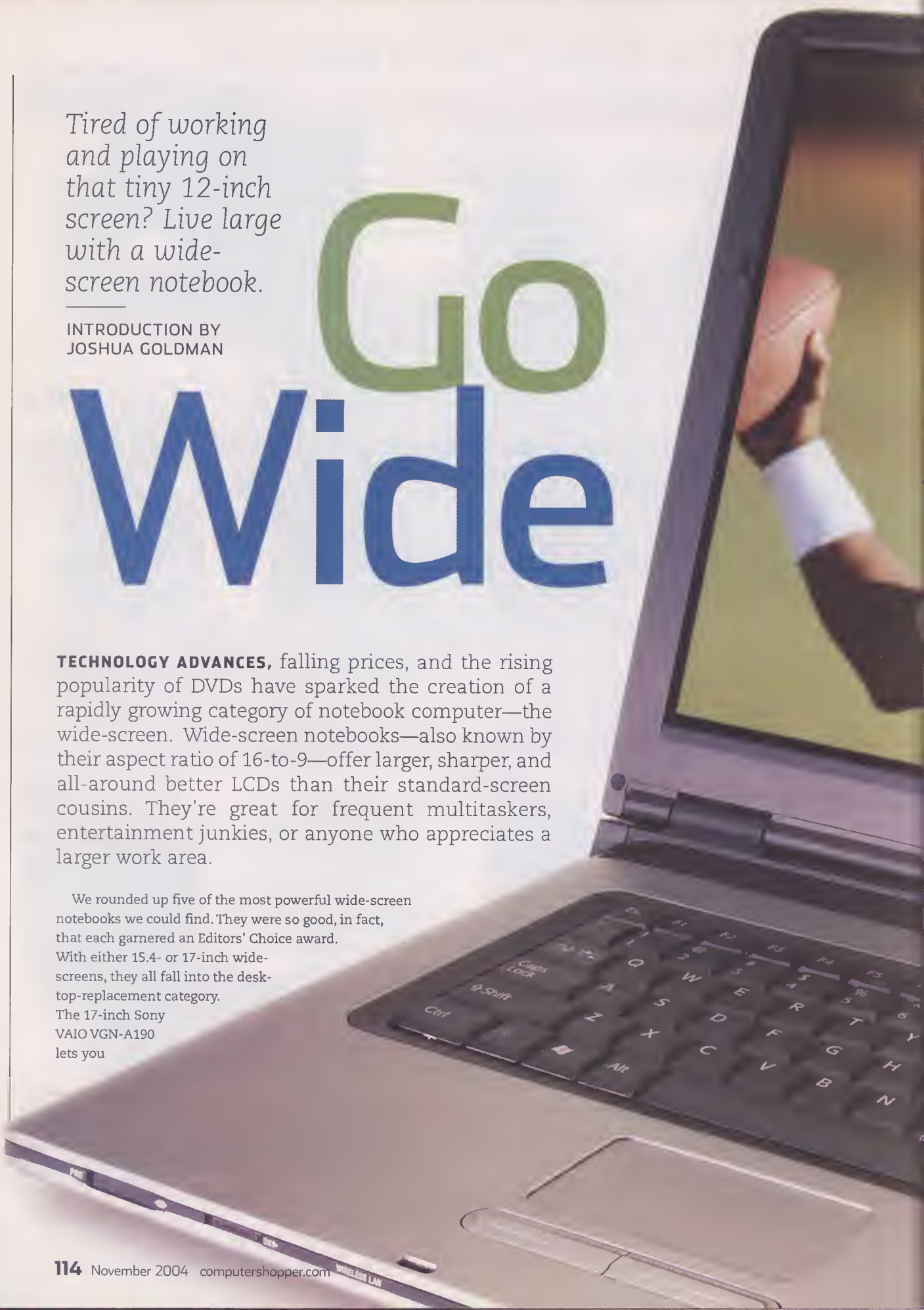
Tired of working and playing on that tiny 12-inch screen? Live large with a wide-screen notebook.

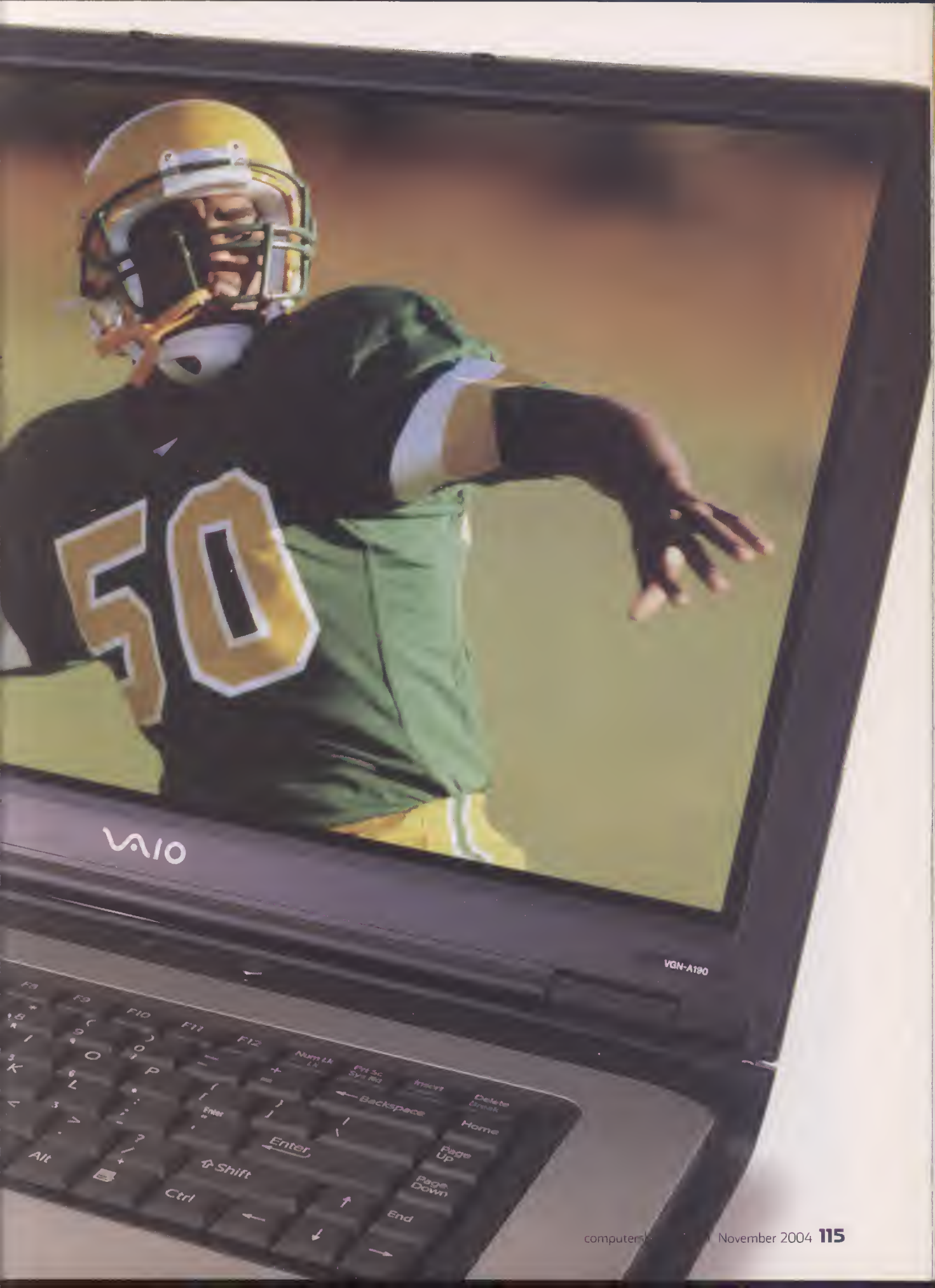
INTRODUCTION BY
JOSHUA GOLDMAN

Go Wide



TECHNOLOGY ADVANCES, falling prices, and the rising popularity of DVDs have sparked the creation of a rapidly growing category of notebook computer—the wide-screen. Wide-screen notebooks—also known by their aspect ratio of 16-to-9—offer larger, sharper, and all-around better LCDs than their standard-screen cousins. They're great for frequent multitaskers, entertainment junkies, or anyone who appreciates a larger work area.

We rounded up five of the most powerful wide-screen notebooks we could find. They were so good, in fact, that each garnered an Editors' Choice award. With either 15.4- or 17-inch wide-screens, they all fall into the desk-top-replacement category. The 17-inch Sony VAIO VGN-A190 lets you


VAIO
VGN-A190
Backspace
Enter
Shift
Ctrl
Alt
Home
Page Up
Page Down
End
Insert
Delete

watch and record TV programming and handle just about any other multimedia task. (Those looking to take in a flick during a long commute should consider Sony's travel-friendly TR-series portables, which feature 10.6-inch wide-aspect screens. See the Top 100 feature in this issue.)

Apple aficionados should check out the 17-inch Apple PowerBook. Apple was the first to release a 17-inch notebook, and though others have followed, the power, beauty, and portability of this desktop replacement can't be beat.

Gaming on a notebook used to mean Solitaire and FreeCell. Not anymore—these powerhouses are not only capable of running detailed 3D games, they've also got the screen resolutions, refresh rates, and size so you can fully immerse yourself. Laptops such as the Dell Inspiron XPS and HP Pavilion ZD7000 are pricey (the Dell model is more than $3,800), but for frequent LAN partiers or those who simply lack the space for a full-size desktop rig, these notebooks are true gaming options.

ABS Mayhem G1

Editors' Rating: 8.2 out of 10

Pros: Fast; top components; bright screen; 802.11b/g wireless; decent price

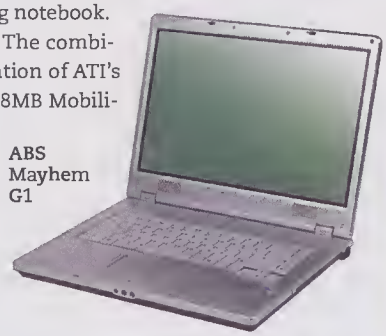
Cons: Short battery life; heavy AC adapter

EDITORS' CHOICE

THE ABS MAYHEM G1 is an impressive gaming notebook, combining a fast processor with a gigabyte of memory and one of the brightest screens around. All told, this notebook is a sleekly styled screamer and a steal at $1,899, as long as you don't need protracted battery life.

At 1.6x14x10.4 inches, the 7.8-pound Mayhem packs a lot of computer into a small case. On the downside, its huge AC adapter weighs a hefty 1.8 pounds, making for an unreasonable travel weight of 9.6 pounds, but this is typical for a gaming notebook.

The combination of ATI's 128MB Mobility Radeon 9600 graphics adapter with a 15.4-inch wide-screen, 1,280x800 display makes this one of the most advanced mobile graphics setups available. A 3.06GHz Pentium 4 processor with Hyper-Threading drives the Mayhem, and 1GB of 333MHz memory, an 80GB hard drive, 802.11b/g wireless networking, and a 4x DVD±RW drive round out the package.



ABS Mayhem G1

Top-notch performance puts this notebook in league with some desktop gaming machines. You'll get even more out of it by trading in the sluggish 4,200rpm hard drive for a high-performance 7,200rpm model, which adds only $51 to the price. It'll cut into the already dismal battery life, however—the 4,400mAh lithium-ion battery didn't even reach the 2-hour mark in our tests.

Ports include parallel and S-Video, as well as three USB 2.0 ports and a FireWire connector. Along with audio-in and -out connections, an optical S/PDIF plug services high-end audio, and the memory-card reader is a gem that works with Memory Stick, SD, and MultiMediaCard media.

The one-year warranty includes onsite service and toll-free tech support weekdays from 11:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. (ET).

The ABS Mayhem G1, chock-full of the best of everything, is a fast gaming notebook and a great value.

Apple PowerBook G4

Editors' Rating: 8.1 out of 10

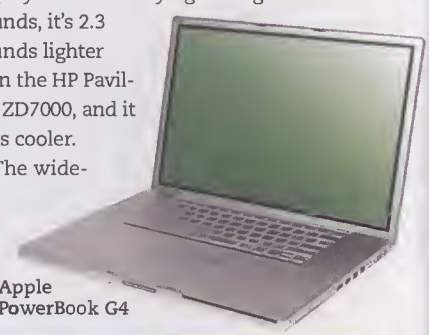
Pros: Light for its size; wide, bright display; Bluetooth, 802.11b/g wireless; plenty of high-speed I/O, video ports; long battery life

Cons: Phone support is free for only 90 days

EDITORS' CHOICE

APPLE WAS THE FIRST vendor to release a notebook with a 17-inch screen. And though other wide-screen portables showed up shortly thereafter, the $2,799 17-inch PowerBook G4 holds its own against the competition, with its gorgeous display and relatively light weight. At 6.9 pounds, it's 2.3 pounds lighter than the HP Pavilion ZD7000, and it runs cooler.

The wide-



Apple PowerBook G4

Feature Comparison

	ABS Mayhem G1	Apple PowerBook G4	Dell Inspiron XPS	HP Pavilion ZD7000	Sony VAIO VGN-A190
EDITORS' RATING	8.2	8.1	8.8	8.3	8.3
CONFIGURATION					
Processor	3.06GHz Pentium 4	1.33GHz PowerPC G4*	3.4GHz Pentium 4 Extreme Edition	3.2GHz Pentium 4 Extreme Edition	1.7GHz Pentium M 735
System Memory	1GB DDR	512MB DDR	512MB DDR	1GB DDR	512MB DDR
Graphics Accelerator	ATI Mobility Radeon 9600 (128MB)	ATI Mobility Radeon 9700 (64MB)	ATI Mobility Radeon 9800 (256MB)	nVidia GeForce FX Go5600 (128MB)	ATI Mobility Radeon 9700 (64MB)
Hard Drive Capacity	80GB	80GB	60GB	80GB	80GB
Optical Drive	DVD±RW	DVD-R/CD-RW	DVD+RW	DVD+RW	DVD±RW
Display	15.4-inch 1,280x800 LCD	17-inch 1,440x900 LCD	15.4-inch 1,920x1,200 LCD	17-inch 1,440x900 LCD	17-inch 1,920x1,200 LCD
Wireless Connectivity	Integrated 802.11b/g	AirPort Extreme 802.11b/g, Bluetooth	Integrated 802.11b/g	Integrated 802.11b/g	Intel Pro/Wireless 2200BG 802.11b/g
Operating System	Windows XP Home Edition	Mac OS X 10.3	Windows XP Professional	Windows XP Media Center Edition 2004	Windows XP Home Edition
Weight (Pounds)**	7.8	6.9	9.4	9.2	8.6
Dimensions (HWD, Inches)	1.6x14x10.4	1x15.4x10.2	2x14.1x10.8	1.8x15.7x10.9	1.8x15.9x11
Parts-and-Labor Warranty	One year	One year	One year	One year	One year
COMPANY	**ABS Computer Technologies** 800-876-8088 www.abspc.com	**Apple Computer** 800-692-7753 www.apple.com	**Dell** 800-999-3355 www.dell.com	**Hewlett-Packard** 800-888-9909 www.hp.com	**Sony Electronics** 877-865-7669 www.sonystyle.com
DIRECT PRICE	$1,899	$2,799	$3,864	$3,247	$2,699

* = Upgraded to 1.5GHz at press time ** = Not including AC adapter

screen display delivers a 1,440x900 resolution and produces bright, sharp images with stunning colors. Screen brightness even adjusts automatically depending on lighting conditions. At 1x15.4x10.2 inches, this PowerBook is a bit large, but it's light and runs cool enough to sit on your lap.

Standard specs include a 1.33GHz PowerPC G4 processor (upgraded at press time to 1.5GHz), 512MB of memory, and a 64MB ATI Mobility Radeon 9700 graphics chipset. You also get an 80GB hard drive, AirPort Extreme 802.11b/g wireless networking, Gigabit Ethernet connectivity, and Bluetooth hardware.

Performance is solid, especially with Apple-designed applications for OS X 10.3 (Panther), such as iTunes and iMovie. Battery life was excellent for a notebook of this size and power, holding out for 2 hours and 40 minutes in our tests.

Peripheral connections are plentiful, with multiple options for external displays through the two video-out ports. DVI and S-Video ports connect you to digital displays and televisions, and each port comes with a converter cable: one for VGA monitors, and one for composite video. Connect an external monitor to duplicate what's on the built-in display, or extend your viewing space by dragging windows between the two (a long-time desktop-Mac feature). The PC Card expansion slot, I/O ports, and two USB 2.0 ports are conveniently located on the sides, as are two FireWire ports (one each of the 800Mbps and 400Mbps varieties). Up front is a slot-loading DVD-R/CD-RW drive—no tray to fumble with.

Apple's standard warranty offers one year for parts-and-labor coverage, though just a measly 90 days for toll-free 24/7 tech support.

At 6.9 pounds and 1 inch thick, the Apple PowerBook G4 is one of the lightest, most feature-packed desktop-replacement notebooks ever, and well worth its high cost.

Dell Inspiron XPS

Editors' Rating: 8.8 out of 10

Pros: Fast performance; integrated 802.11b/g wireless; swappable DVD+RW drive

Cons: Expensive; heavy; short battery life; enormous case; massive AC adapter

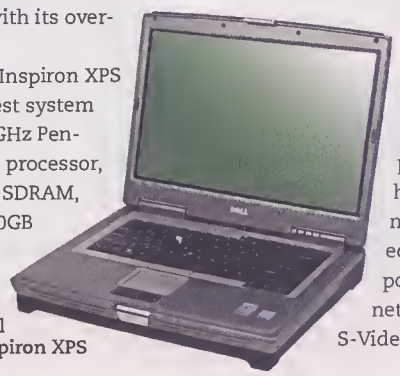
EDITORS' CHOICE

FRAGGING your opponent was never so much fun as with the $3,864 Dell Inspiron XPS. Dell has designed this pricey new desktop-replacement notebook specifically for gamers, loading it with the fastest desktop Pentium 4 processor, and a big 15.4-inch display with an ultrafine 1,920x1,200 native resolution, not to mention a rich-sounding subwoofer and a 256MB ATI Mobility Radeon 9800 graphics chipset. Naturally, battery life is compromised by such fast performance, but the sheer size and weight of the Inspiron XPS probably will keep you from taking it on the road, anyway—it measures 2x14.1x10.8 inches and weighs 9.4 pounds (11.5 pounds with its overweight AC adapter).

The spec list for the Inspiron XPS is sure to please. Our test system arrived with Intel's 3.4GHz Pentium 4 Extreme Edition processor, 512MB of 400MHz DDR SDRAM, and a swift 7,200rpm 60GB hard drive. The Inspiron XPS also includes a swappable media bay that opens out of its left edge and houses the included DVD+RW drive, or an optional floppy drive or second battery. Integrated 802.11b/g wireless networking is also included.

All this component goodness added up to jaw-dropping application performance and the fastest graphics score we've seen to date from a notebook. But the hefty laptop's 14.8-volt, 6,400mAh battery drained completely in just 2 hours and 6 minutes.

Dell equipped the Inspiron XPS with plenty of connections. A PC Card slot occupies the notebook's left edge, along with a FireWire port and two jacks for headphones and a microphone. The back edge offers additional ports, including Ethernet, 56Kbps modem, S-Video out, VGA, and DVI



Dell Inspiron XPS

Boot-Free Entertainment

The overwhelming popularity of DVDs has had a tremendous impact on the notebook industry. Not only can you find an optical drive capable of playing DVDs in just about every notebook on the market, but the adoption of the format has led to some key design changes, including 16-to-9-format wide-screens—a natural choice for movie viewing.

If you're a commuter, or a frequent flier who likes to mix business with pleasure, listening to music or watching films on a notebook is nothing new. But how about doing those things without booting up? A new generation of portables is blurring the line between consumer electronics and personal computing, turning your notebook into a mobile personal-entertainment center *and* a PC.

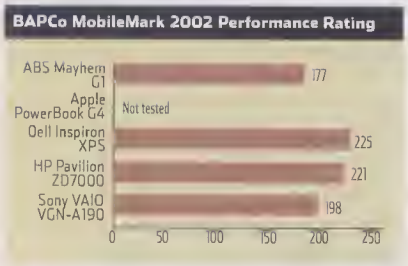
Averatec 6200 Series

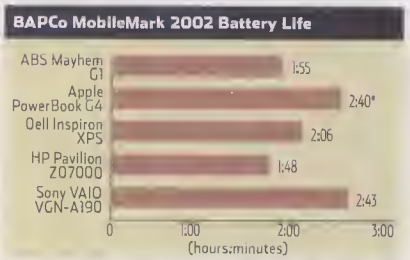
Though it features solid components such as a 1.8GHz AMD Athlon XP-M 2400+ processor, 512MB of memory, and a 60GB hard drive, Averatec's $1,249 6200 series offers more than just mobile-computing power. The notebook doubles as a stand-alone DVD and CD player. The unique design lets you enjoy DVD movies, audio CDs, and MP3 files without booting the notebook's operating system. The 15.4-inch, 1,280x800-resolution XGA LCD makes the flick-watching experience even better. Averatec claims the 6200 will play three 90-minute movies on a single battery charge in DVD-player mode.

Toshiba Qosmio E15-AV101

The $2,699 Qosmio (pronounced KOSS-mee-oh) E15-AV101 sees the Averatec's convergence offerings and raises them with an integrated TV tuner. Not only can you view DVDs and listen to CDs independent of the PC, you can also watch television. Once you do decide to boot up, you have the benefit of the Windows XP Media Center Edition 2004 OS, which, among other media-related tasks, lets you pause and record live TV programming. The E15-AV101 has a 1.7GHz Pentium M 735 processor, 512MB of RAM, and an 80GB hard drive. The extraordinarily bright 15-inch display has a resolution of 1,024x768. Other models include 15.4-inch and 17-inch wide-screens.

—*J.G.*



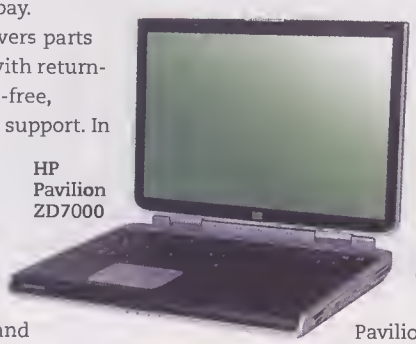


* = Tested using CNET Labs DVD Test

(the last for connecting a digital monitor), as well as three regular USB 2.0 ports and a fourth connector that accommodates powered USB devices, such as Dell's external modular bay.

The base warranty covers parts and labor for one year, with return-to-depot service and toll-free, around-the-clock phone support. In a helpful twist on this typical plan, Dell offers a special tech-support number exclusively for Inspiron XPS owners.

Thanks to its powerful graphics subsystem and heavy-duty processor, the Dell Inspiron XPS is truly one of the best gaming notebooks you can buy.



HP Pavilion ZD7000

HP Pavilion ZD7000

Editors' Rating: 8.3 out of 10

Pros: Fast; well-designed; enormous screen; DVD+RW

Cons: Heavy; short battery life

EDITORS' CHOICE

HEWLETT-PACKARD'S 9.2-pound Pavilion ZD7000 has as much power as a desktop and is almost as big. Running Microsoft's Windows XP Media Center Edition 2004, this $3,247 notebook features hefty multimedia capabilities and fast performance but disappointing battery life.

Outfitted with impressive hardware, our Pavilion ZD7000 arrived with a powerful 3.2GHz desktop Pentium 4 Extreme Edition CPU, 1GB of DDR SDRAM, and a large 80GB hard drive. A DVD+RW drive accommodates most optical media, but it's a fixed drive—you can't swap it out for a second battery. Controlled by a robust 128MB nVidia GeForce FX Go5600 graphics chipset (at press time, HP changed this to a choice between a Go5200 and a Go5700 chipset), the 17-inch screen has a 1,440x900 native resolution. Colors are well-saturated, and text is sharp and clean. The image fades when viewing from above or the side, however, so gathering friends around this laptop to watch a movie won't work.

This Pavilion is an extremely fast performer, whether it's plugged into an AC outlet or operating on battery power. Not surprisingly, the price is lackluster battery longevity—in our tests, the cell drained in a brief 1 hour and 48 minutes.

HP stocked the Pavilion with plenty of important connections, including a quartet of USB 2.0 ports, an S-Video port, and a FireWire port, plus two flash-memory slots that read MultiMediaCard, SD, SmartMedia, and Memory Stick media. The notebook also offers a PC Card slot and integrated 802.11b/g wireless networking. Stereo speakers line the laptop's entire front edge; the sound is at least as good as small external speakers. HP covers the Pavilion with a one-year warranty that includes toll-free tech support around the clock and free pickup and delivery for repairs.

The HP Pavilion ZD7000 is among the fastest notebooks we've tested. It's equipped to please entertainment hounds, shutterbugs, and gamers, though its heft and short battery life will discourage highly mobile users.

Sony VAIO VGN-A190

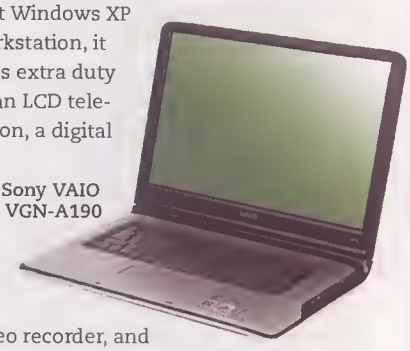
Editors' Rating: 8.3 out of 10

Pros: TV with digital video recorder; external speakers; fast; large, bright, high-res screen; better-than-average battery life

Cons: Big; heavy

EDITORS' CHOICE

BEST KNOWN FOR creating some of the smallest and lightest notebooks around, Sony does a 180 and goes big—very big—with the $2,699 VAIO VGN-A190. A desktop replacement that needs only legs to serve as a desk itself, the VGN-A190 is large and heavy enough to overwhelm any airliner's tray table. But it's big for good reason, functioning as a mobile entertainment center that features a 17-inch 1,920x1,200-native-resolution widescreen display, external speakers, and a remarkably well-integrated port replicator. Not only is the VGN-A190 a competent Windows XP workstation, it does extra duty as an LCD television, a digital video recorder, and a decent stereo, making it a digital jack-of-all-trades.



Sony VAIO VGN-A190

The VAIO VGN-A190 was the only laptop in this roundup with a mobile processor—the 1.7GHz Pentium M 735. This, coupled with 512MB of memory, a 64MB ATI Mobility Radeon 9700 graphics chipset, and an 80GB hard drive, provides more than enough performance. Because the Pentium M is a mobile processor, you'd expect above-average battery life, and the Sony delivers with a lifespan of 2 hours and 43 minutes per charge. Chances are, though, with measurements of 1.8x15.9x11 inches and a travel weight of more than 10 pounds (8.6 pounds without the AC adapter), you're not going to wander far from a power outlet.

The notebook's look is Sony through and through, with a demure gray-plastic case that has gently rounded edges and black side cutouts. All told, you'll find connectors for every conceivable purpose: audio, FireWire, and a trio of USB ports; PC Card and Memory Stick slots; modem and LAN jacks; and external-monitor and A/V outputs. A 4x DVD±RW drive gives you full playback and recording options for CDs and DVDs.

Sony covers the notebook with a one-year warranty on parts and labor, but you need to ship the machine (at Sony's expense) to one of its depots for repairs.

The Sony VAIO VGN-A190 is a great notebook for those who want a full-featured entertainment center in a package that's (somewhat) smaller than a desktop PC.

Reviews by Stephanie Bruzzese, Justin Jaffe, Dan Littman, Brian Nadel, and John Rizzo

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30 Searching Secrets

Essential shortcuts and pointers you need to get fast, accurate Web-search results.

BY BRIAN T. HOROWITZ

Internet search engines contain a vast number of hidden shortcuts that can take the stress out of your research, save you time, and even provide some fun in the process. Three prominent search engines—Google **(www.google.com)**, Microsoft's MSN Search **(search.msn.com)**, and Yahoo Search **(search.yahoo.com)**—all have some tricks to help you locate your information more efficiently. Following are some pointers to help you use each of these services to find what you're looking for, faster.

GOOGLE

There's a reason why Google is currently the most popular search engine. Actually, we can think of three: It has the biggest database of results, it's reliable, and its main search results are ad-free, unlike Yahoo's. (All three search engines include separate, highlighted sponsored ads, however.)

One of Google's often-overlooked tools is the I'm Feeling Lucky button. An alternative to using the search button to look through a set of results, I'm Feeling Lucky takes you directly to the Web page most likely to have what you're looking for. Say you're having a problem with your Dell desktop and need tech support. You can type **Dell tech support** into the search field, hit I'm Feeling Lucky, and end up on the tech-support page of Dell's Web site.

Use Google Local **(local.google.com)** to find a local store in your own town. You'll find business listings, maps, and directories for specific locations. You'll see a small compass icon that takes you to a Google Local search-results page.

Google's wild-card trick is the asterisk, which you can substitute for a missing word in a title. If you can't remember which version of the Pentium has a 2GHz speed, search for **Pentium * 2GHz** to find out.

You can find additional shortcuts to some of the popular Google search features at Soople **(www.soople.com)**. And if you're shopping for any type of product and want to know where it's being sold online, try Froogle **(froogle.google.com)**.

Say you want to search for Canon digital cameras that cost between $150 and $350. Type **Canon digital cameras $150..$350** (your search phrase followed by a range of prices, with the range separated by two periods). Then, after you order your camera, you can track its shipping status. Google and Yahoo offer FedEx, UPS, and U.S. Postal Service package tracking—in Google, just type the tracking number for your package in the search field, and you'll be able to find out where your package is while in transit.

MSN SEARCH

Although Google and Yahoo are currently more advanced in their search technology, Microsoft is working on its own search engine, independent of Yahoo, due next year. Microsoft last summer stopped using a "paid inclusion" model for search results, which involves mixing paid and nonpaid results. (Yahoo still uses this practice; Google does not.) If you prefer Yahoo's database of search results but don't want paid listings, try MSN Search.

Use MSN Search's drop-down menu to narrow your results to specific areas such as MSN's 4,800-source news database, a dictionary, stock quotes, MSN Entertainment's movie database, and the company's Encarta encyclopedia.

YAHOO SEARCH

Yahoo mixes in some results that have been paid for and some that haven't, but its results are still top-notch. Yahoo's most notable tools are its long list of shortcuts, which allow you to easily find information on a huge variety of topics, including currencies, maps, weather, and sports scores. To see the full list, go to **tools.search.yahoo.com/shortcuts**.

Yahoo's currency converter comes in handy when you're getting ready for an overseas trip or want to buy a product sold by a shop in a foreign country. If a Sony VAIO VGN-A130 notebook costs 130,247 yen in Japan, type **convert 130,247 yen to dollars** if you're buying the laptop from a vendor in the United States.

As with Google, you can track the status of your product after it has shipped. If your new gadget has shipped through UPS, just enter the tracking code to get its whereabouts. For FedEx, you need to type **fedex** before the code; for the U.S. Postal Service, **usps** must preface the number.

Also, to find which gas station has the cheapest prices in your area, type **gas** followed by your ZIP code, then click GasPriceWatch.com or GasBuddy.com.

If you have a conference call with a colleague in San Francisco and want to know what the time is there, type **time in San Francisco.**

Yahoo is also helpful in suggesting how to phrase a search differently. If you search for **Nikon Coolpix,** Yahoo will come back with "Also try: nikon coolpix 5700, nikon coolpix 8700, nikon coolpix 4300."

Yahoo is a useful resource for pictures taken as recently as a few minutes ago. To find images of a newsmaker, go to **news.yahoo.com,** select News Photos in the drop-down menu, and enter the name of the person you're searching for.

SHORTCUTS

To save time, download the Google, MSN, or Yahoo toolbar to sit below the address

Search Engines 101

Algorithm
A search engine's method for processing a query and compiling results.

Boolean search
A type of search that lets you add or subtract terms or phrases using operators such as AND, OR, and NOT.

Metasearch engine
A search service that combines information from multiple sources on the Web.

Minus sign (-)
Used to exclude a term or phrase from a search.

Operator
A specific keyword or command that directs a certain operation to be performed in a search—for example, AND, OR, NOT. (These are Boolean operators.)

Paid inclusion
The practice by which a search engine guarantees to include a certain Web site in its database and update that site's listings more frequently in exchange for payment. These listings are mixed in with nonpaid results.

Plus sign (+)
Used to require a certain term or phrase to appear in search results.

Spider
Software that crawls over the Web, searching for information to include in a search engine's index.

Stemming
Technology that enables a search engine to add possible words or spellings to a set of words.

Illustrations by Bill Rieser

bar in your Web browser and allow you to bypass the search site's URL— you can simply enter your question within the toolbar's search field. You can also avoid entering a search site's URL by entering your question in the Internet Explorer address field. By default, a search in this field yields search results from MSN, but if you've installed Google Toolbar, you'll get Google results instead.

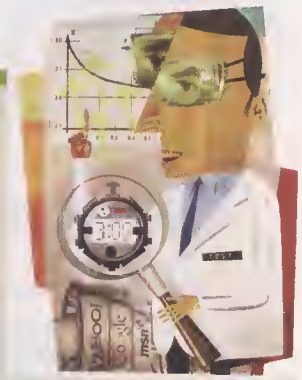
All three services also provide a built-in dictionary. To uncover a hidden meaning with Google and Yahoo, type **define** followed by your search term. In MSN, select Dictionary in the drop-down menu next to the search field. Another way to get a definition is to phrase your question in the form of an answer. For example, typing **"DVR stands for"** brings up several hits for "digital video recorder."

Be specific in your search, and use quotation marks when searching for an exact phrase. For instance, typing **"Sony DVD recorders"** will find information on DVD recorders by Sony. If you seek information on the Samsung SPH-i500 cell phone, you don't want results for every mention of Samsung on the Web; a search for the exact product name, in quotes, will narrow the results to the specific phone model.

OPERATORS

In most search engines, you can use certain keywords, called operators, to restrict your results to certain word usage, terms, or domains. Boolean operators, such as **AND, OR,** and **NOT,** can restrict or expand the words in your search. (See the sidebar "Search Engines 101.") There's no need to include the operator **AND** (or, for that matter, the word "and") in a search unless it's part of a phrase in quotes. For searches using an operator followed by a colon, make sure you omit a space before and after the colon.

Site: If you want to search for information at a particular Web site, use the **site:** operator. Enter **pavilion site:www.hp.com** to find info on Hewlett-Packard's Pavilion PCs at HP's site rather than information all over the Web on canopies



Precision Inquisition: Which Is Most Accurate?

WE PUT GOOGLE, MSN Search, and Yahoo Search to the test to see how they performed on three specific queries. Then we ranked each service from 1 to 5 (higher is better), based on accuracy of returns.

Query 1: **"Vegas 5"**
We searched for **"Vegas 5"** (in quotation marks) to see if the search engines would deliver information on the current version of Sony's Vegas video-editing software—or bombard us with locations within 5 miles of Las Vegas.

Query 2: **"Outlook caused an Invalid Page Fault in Riched20.dll"**
We looked up this cryptic Microsoft Outlook error message, which can occur when launching the application.

Query 3: **"How do I reformat my hard drive?"**
To find out how to reformat a hard drive and get a PC running faster, we entered the above query as a complete sentence in quotes.

GOOGLE

Sure enough, Google returned the product-information page for Vegas 5 on Sony's Web site as the first hit, followed by several screens' worth of reviews and other sites related to the software. A page related to Las Vegas didn't come up until the seventh search page.

When searching for our Outlook error message, Google's first hit was the appropriate Microsoft support page, explaining the steps to solve the problem. This site was followed by some links to a few lesser-known sites for more help.

For the third query, Google brought up links to several helpful bulletin-board and tech-support sites, sealing the deal as the best search engine. We came across the IT professionals' bulletin-board site Experts Exchange **(www.experts-exchange.com)**, some university sites, and the support sites Cyberwalker **(www.cyberwalker.net)** and Mr. Modem's Website **(www.mrmodem.com)**.

Rating: 5

MSN SEARCH

MSN had a couple of old links related to the Vegas software on the third and seventh hits, while mostly bringing up information on the city of Las Vegas.

Like Google, MSN came up with the Microsoft support page for our Outlook-error query on the first hit, along with additional, undistinguished sites.

For our hard drive query, our search "How do I reformat my hard drive?" brought up some old, obscure sites, along with the helpful forums and tech-support sites that Google uncovered.

Rating: 3

YAHOO SEARCH

On Yahoo, the link to Sony's Vegas 5 page didn't come up until the 72nd hit. Until then, we got mostly Las Vegas-related results, which probably has to do with the search engine's paid-inclusion program.

With the Outlook-error query, Yahoo brought up results similar to those of Google and MSN: the Microsoft support page, followed by a couple of unfamiliar sites.

Yahoo excelled in our drive-reformatting query, bringing up some helpful sites on the first shot. A site called JM Tech Support **(tech.jmwebdesigns.com)** appeared at the top of the search results with helpful information. Rephrasing the search as **"Reformatting a hard drive" "Windows XP"** improved the results slightly, with Annoyances.org **(www.annoyances.org)** and Cyberwalker moving up to one and two.

Rating: 4

SERVICES ARE RATED 1 TO 5 (HIGHER IS BETTER)

or tents. The **site:** syntax is also helpful if you want to search for information only on sites having a particular top-level domain (for instance, .gov or .org). Enter **internet legislation site:gov** to restrict your search to government sites (.gov) holding information on Internet legislation.

-Site: At times you might want to exclude a certain Web site from your search. Key in **archos jukebox multimedia -site:www.archos.com** to learn what sites besides the manufacturer's have to say about the Archos Jukebox Multimedia player.

Inurl: The **inurl:** operator helps limit your Google or Yahoo top results to particular Web sites containing a certain word in their URLs. Try **thinkpad inurl:ibm** to find information on ThinkPad notebooks at Web sites containing "IBM" in their URLs. These tools should help you find the right sources, though just typing your search term in quotation marks, especially in Google, should bring the most relevant site to the top of your search results.

Related: This operator works only in Google. Use **related:** to find Web sites similar to one you've already searched. Say you've shopped at Buy.com and want to check out similar online stores. Type **related:www.buy.com** to bring up other online retailers.

Intitle: Try the **intitle:** command to search the titles of Web pages for particular words. This tool is useful at Google News **(news.google.com)**, where you can find news articles on a subject from a variety of information sources from the last 30 days. Enter **intitle:ipod** to find recent articles on Apple's latest iPods. This command works only in Google and Yahoo.

Multisource Metasearching

TO PRODUCE BROADER Web results from a number of search sites, delve into a metasearch engine. These engines cull results from a number of sources, including Ask Jeeves, Gigablast, Google, and Yahoo.

The most prominent metasearch engine is Dogpile **(www.dogpile.com)**. This site provides a mixture of paid and nonpaid search results. Like Google, MSN Search, and Yahoo Search, Dogpile offers a search toolbar that you can download to your browser.

When setting your advanced-search criteria in Dogpile, select the sort-by-relevance button in the Results Display section to display the results most relevant to your search. Or you can choose to group your results by search-engine source on the advanced-search page or the search-results page. Also use the advanced-search page to restrict your search to sites with certain top-level-domain suffixes (.gov, .edu) or to a date range. Watch your spacing in Dogpile—the site returns different results based on the spacing in your query.

Another metasearch engine, Vivisimo **(www.vivisimo.com)**, is known for its clustering technology, which splits search results into different categories, visible to the left of your search results. This capability is helpful when searching for particular products. You can also choose the search sources from which you want to pull your results. Click on Advanced and unclick the search engines you don't want to query.

At Search.com **(www.search.com)**, from *Computer Shopper's* parent company, CNET Networks, you can choose the sites you want to search within a certain category. Go to Research by Topic, choose your category, and select the sites you want to search within it. Both Search.com and ZapMeta **(www.zapmeta.com)** are useful if you want to see a preview of your search results. Search.com performs this function automatically; in ZapMeta, you'll have to go to Set Preferences and click the "on" button for Result Snapshots.

The metasearch site Mamma.com **(www.mamma.com)** has an Explorer Bar to download to your Web browser. In addition to searching the site from your browser, the Explorer Bar allows you to save your search results in specific folders. And like Search.com and Vivisimo, Mamma.com lets you specify which engines to search.

QUICK QUERIES

All three engines offer additional shortcuts to up-to-the-minute data. In Google, stock watchers can type the stock ticker in the search field, then click the graph icon to be directed to the quote in Yahoo Finance. In Yahoo, simply type **quote** followed by the stock ticker. In MSN, select Stock Quotes from the drop-down menu to the right of the search button, and enter the ticker in the search field.

Google and Yahoo are also great resources to monitor the status of a flight. Type **American 33** to track American Airlines flight 33. Yahoo then directs you to its own travel site for info; Google relies on Fboweb.com and Travelocity.

To look up a residential or business listing in Google or Yahoo, type **name, city, state** (for example, **CompUSA, Wichita, Kansas**). Narrow down by residential or business listings in Google by first typing **rphonebook:** or **bphonebook:** with no space after the colon (for example, **bphonebook:staples, new york, ny**). Or type an area code into the search field of Google or Yahoo to find the corresponding city. You can also match up a ZIP code with a city by typing the ZIP into either of the two engines. (Google directs you to the information in Yahoo Maps or MapQuest.)

You can make use of various mathematical tools in Google and Yahoo, too. Say you're thinking of buying an iRiver iFP-790 MP3 player and need to know what its 37-gram weight is in ounces. Just type **convert 37 grams to ounces** to get a result of 1.3 ounces. Calculator functions are similarly easy to use. Type **8+4, 8-4, 8*4,** or any similar mathematical operation in the Google or Yahoo search field.

Each of these tips should make your searches quicker and more efficient. For more search-engine tips, visit ResearchBuzz **(www.researchbuzz.com)**, Search Engine Guide **(www.searchengineguide.com)**, SearchEngines.com **(www.searchengines.com)**, or Search Engine Watch **(www.searchenginewatch.com)**.

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Keyboard/Mouse Combo: 230122 Logitech® Cordless MX Duo Cordless (Retail Box) - $75.00

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DUAL-DISK-DRIVE DILEMMA

I have a computer with four IDE devices: two hard drives, a CD-ROM drive, and a CD burner. The two hard drives are mounted in removable trays and are on the primary IDE channel as master and slave, showing up as drives C: and D:. The CD drives are on the secondary IDE channel and show as E: and F:. Is this the best configuration? Also, I notice the hard drive lights on the removable trays always go on and off together, without regard to which drive I am accessing. Is this normal?
DICK BROMBERG

UNLESS THE TWO HARD DRIVES are the same make and model, they may have different performance specifications, and it's possible the faster one will slow down to match the speed of the slower one. The best way to avoid this is to set each as master on its own IDE channel. Leave C: alone, but change D: to master and put it on the secondary IDE channel. The optical drives should not affect the hard drive performance, so set them both to slave and put one on each IDE channel for optimal performance.

As for the removable trays blinking in unison, I suspect they're reacting to data transfer on the IDE bus, not on the individual drives. If this is indeed true, you'll see them blinking independently after you change the connections as I've suggested.

TO ISP OR NOT TO ISP?

If I buy a broadband modem, do I still need an ISP to get high-speed Internet access?
LOU CHEE

JUST BECAUSE YOU CAN buy a telephone doesn't mean you get phone service. In the same way, you can buy a DSL or cable broadband modem, but plugging it into the wall or connecting to your cable won't do you much good without service.

When you get broadband service, you are essentially connecting your system to the network of the broadband provider. It's their server that's connected to the Internet, and your computer is just a workstation sharing that connection. When you sign up for broadband service, you'll also get ISP services, including Internet and e-mail access.

DRAWING A BLANK

After my computer has been running for a while, it will frequently freeze up momentarily, and the screen will go blank. After a few moments, the screen comes back on and unfreezes. I checked the motherboard temperatures, and they are all within acceptable limits—the machine is actually running quite cool. Could my graphics card be the source of the problem?
BRIAN KOHSER

> You can buy a DSL or cable broadband modem, but plugging it into the wall or connecting it to your cable won't do you much good without service.

YES, THE GRAPHICS ACCELERATOR would be my prime suspect in this case. The fact that the screen goes blank is probably an indication that the graphics signal is dropping out and triggering the monitor's energy-saving sleep mode. A failing graphics adapter could also play a role in crashing your system.

One possible cause is that the graphics-processor chip is overheating. Whether the graphics adapter is on a separate card or integrated on the motherboard, make sure the area around it is not obstructed by cables that might block the movement of air. If it is on a separate card, try to avoid placing another card in the adjacent slot to encourage airflow.

If the problem persists, either remove your graphics card or disable the circuitry if it's integrated on the motherboard, and borrow a graphics card from another computer to use in its place as an experiment. If the problem does not recur, a permanent replacement should solve the problem.

A NEWER OLD OS

I have a laptop with a 266MHz Pentium II processor, 256MB of memory, and the first edition of Windows 98 installed. What operating system should I use to upgrade this system? I plan to use it for word processing, balancing my checkbook, and accessing the Internet.
KENNETH GELNICK

THE ONLY OPERATING SYSTEM I can recommend is Windows 98 Second Edition (SE). Windows XP would run too slowly, because the 266MHz Pentium II processor does not have sufficient power, and I would not suggest any of the other versions of Windows for what you have in mind. Windows 98 SE should be able to handle your applications without any problems, and you should get passable performance from this configuration.

FEE-FREE BACKUP

Can you suggest any free programs for backing up my hard drive?
JACOB ELLIS

FIRST, IT'S IMPORTANT to understand the difference between the various types of "free" software. You can often find demo versions of commercial programs—some call this "teaseware"—that will stop working properly after a set period of time. You can also find "shareware," software that the authors will let you try for free, but request that you pay a registration fee if you end up keeping it. Finally, true "freeware" doesn't require any registration fee at all.

If you do a Google search on "backup"

and "freeware," you'll find a number of options. I've never used either of these, so I can't offer any positive or negative feedback on them, but two candidates I found are Bushido Backup **(www.users.yourvillage.com/bricker3)** and Dfg BackUp **(dfg1.netfirms.com/products/a_backup_e.htm)**.

SAFE SWAPPING

Can I hot-swap an Ethernet Cat-5 cable in the same way I can hot-swap with a USB cable without doing harm?
ANDRE NORMAN

IN THE OLD DAYS, the recommended practice was to power down either the computer or the peripheral—or both—before connecting or removing any cable, because stray voltage from the wrong pin could cause irreparable harm to an expensive modem or printer. In reality, little risk actually existed, and I confess to having plugged and unplugged hundreds of printers, modems, and monitors over the years without a single problem.

USB is designed to let you plug in and detach devices at will. (Plus, the Windows operating system is poised to recognize when a USB device appears in or disappears from its sight instantly.) Ethernet is designed the same way—the network is always on, and the hub will recognize when a PC is added or removed.

PHONE AS MODEM?

I want to connect my Nokia cell phone to my laptop so I can dial up a server and access the Internet. I've heard of people doing this, but I just can't seem to get the correct instructions. Can you help?
MICHAEL VANZIE

THE BEST PLACE TO START is the phone manufacturer's Web site, to see what accessories are available for your phone. The good news is that many newer mobile phones have modem capabilities built in. You can pick up a data cable (about $35 to $50) for many Nokia models, which will allow you to connect the phone directly to your notebook.

You'll still need to arrange a dial-up account with an ISP, and you may be charged for Internet usage even if your phone plan includes prepaid talk time.

Finally, keep in mind that the cell-phone connection will be considerably slower than other options. A landline phone connection can typically yield transfer rates of 30Kbps to 40Kbps, but a cell phone won't achieve anywhere near those speeds. If you can find a Wi-Fi connection, you may get up to 11Mbps transmission rates, and with Ethernet, you can get up to 100Mbps. Many people find cell-phone data rates acceptable for e-mail and other text-only apps, but painfully slow for graphics and Web surfing.

TIP OF THE MONTH: FINDING NEEDLES IN INTERNET HAYSTACKS

If you want to find facts on anything from the Detroit Tigers to the Tigris River, oodles of Web pages will tell you all the details you'd ever want to know. Powerful search engines such as Google make finding facts easier, but once you've found the page you want, it can be a chore to find the specific information you seek. Most browsers will search for a text string on the current page, but then you have to jump from one hit to the next. This month's tipster has an easier way to find terms within a page.

I routinely come across sites with large amounts of information where I need to find a few keywords or phrases. I found a way to highlight the word everywhere on the page using the Google Toolbar (a free download at **www.google.com**). *Even if I didn't use Google to get to that page, I can type in one or more words in the toolbar's search field. Instead of clicking the Search Web button, I just click on the Highlight button. After that, I can quickly see each place that word lives. I can even look for a group of words if I don't know the exact phrase. It's a great time saver.*
DAVID KRAUSE

THE GOOGLE TOOLBAR is a handy addition to Internet Explorer. Plus, if you want to jump to the next occurrence of a target word, click on the search term, which will appear to the right of the Highlight button on the toolbar.

Google also does a lot of other handy tricks, even without the toolbar. Google makes it easy to convert different measures; for example, type **60 mph in feet per second** in the search field, and the search results report that **60 mph = 88 feet per second.** Exponents are no problem, either: Enter **2^24** in the search field, and the calculator feature will report back that **2^24 = 16 777 216,** which is handy if you want to know how many colors are supported on a 24-bit display. And if you search for a specific word—such as **trunnel**—the results will usually show a link after the word at the upper right marked **[definition]**. Click on this, and you'll discover that a trunnel is a variant of a treenail, a wooden peg used to hold timbers together in shipbuilding. (For more useful Web-search tips and tricks, see "30 Searching Secrets" in this section.)

Send us your favorite tip, and you could receive a tipster's prize package, including a coveted "Computer Cures" T-shirt, along with some other exciting items you can't get anywhere else!

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I just wanted to tell you how pleased I am with the software, training, and speed. It was much easier than I thought, and I could not be happier! Thanks! - David

I'm really impressed with the fast service you guys provide and the polite way you deal with what must seem very basic questions to you. Brilliant service! Thanks! - Sarah

I now have a few sites with you guys and believe me, I know the quality of your service, and it is a pleasure dealing with you. Your company is tops. Thanx again. - Dusty

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BY RICK BROIDA

TRADITIONAL TOWER PCs are fine if you have room to spare, but just try shoehorning one into your entertainment center. A small-form-factor (SFF) PC fits almost all the power and versatility of a full-blown desktop into a much smaller package. Here we show you how to construct a dazzling SFF PC that's compact and powerful, yet living-room stylish.

We started with a bare-bones setup, which includes the motherboard and power supply already installed, and added a processor, DVD burner, and hard drive.

1 Choose your case

Most SFF cases have room for one optical drive, one 3.5-inch drive, and one hard drive. Our goal was to build a PC geared toward entertainment, but if you're more interested in fragging, look for a case that has a motherboard with an AGP slot and enough space for a full-size graphics card. We opted for the $348 AOpen XC Cube AV kit from reseller Ajump.com. Though most SFF cases are of the MicroATX variety, AOpen considers the tiny XC Cube an Ultra Small Form Factor, which requires a smaller motherboard. This attractive black cube has front-mounted USB and FireWire ports and room for one PCI slot and a media-card reader. AOpen even includes a TV-tuner card. You'll also find room for a full-size AGP card, but we chose to stick with the motherboard's built-in graphics, which was fine for our entertainment needs.
Tip: If you plan to attend lots of LAN parties, look for a case with a carrying handle on top.

2 Pick your parts

To fully stock your SFF PC, you'll need a processor, RAM, a hard drive, and an optical drive such as a DVD burner. Most MicroATX motherboards include onboard audio and video circuitry, so depending on how you plan to use the PC, you may not need slots for a sound or graphics card. Make sure the processor and RAM are socket- and speed-compatible with the motherboard. If the front of your case will be visible and lacks a drive door, keep bezel color in mind when choosing an optical drive.

We settled on potent but affordable components, including a $200 2.8GHz Pentium 4 CPU, a $110 512MB stick of Kingston DDR RAM, a $100 80GB hard drive, and a $77 AOpen 8x DVD±RW burner.
Tip: Buy the largest hard drive you can afford. If you use the PC to record TV shows, you'll use up storage space in a hurry.

3 Insert the processor

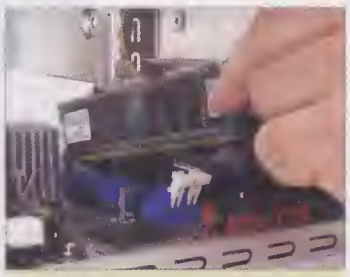
There's nothing difficult about installing a processor, but take great care when doing so. That means working in a static-free environment (no rubber-soled shoes on carpet, please) or at least wearing an antistatic wrist strap. Follow the instructions that came with the processor, and

Carefully line up the CPU with the motherboard socket so that it drops in easily.

take extra care to properly align the chip with the socket. Never force it in—just place it gently, then lower the socket lever. Inspect the processor from multiple angles to make sure it's seated properly. Next, apply a very thin layer of thermal paste on top of the processor and attach the heat sink.
Tip: Don't forget to connect the power-supply cable to the heat-sink fan. Otherwise, you could quickly end up with a fried processor.

4 Pop in the RAM

Installing RAM is even easier. Just align each module's key notch with the matching ridge in the memory socket, then press straight down. You may have to apply a fair amount of pressure, but the modules' locking clips should pop into position on their own.



Align the RAM module with the socket, then press down until it snaps into place.

5 Install the drives

Your next step is to install the hard drive and DVD burner. Set both drives' jumpers to master and use a separate IDE channel on the motherboard for each drive to ensure optimal performance. Attach a ribbon cable to each IDE channel on the motherboard and install the drives in their appropriate bays. This may involve attaching mounting rails to the drives or physically removing a bay from the case—each case is different, so follow the supplied instructions.

After setting jumpers and attaching the IDE cables to the motherboard, install the drives in their appropriate bays.

Once the drives are in place, connect their IDE and power cables. Depending on the case, it may be easier to attach the cables before installing the drives.
Tip: Make sure none of the cables is blocking airflow above the heat-sink fan. If a lot of loose ribbon cable is floating around, fold the excess into layers and rubber-band the package.

6 Power up the PC

Before you close the case, plug in your monitor, keyboard, and mouse, then power up the system. If nothing happens, it's possible your power supply isn't connected to all the right places, or your processor, RAM, or cards aren't seated properly. If you've installed a graphics card, check (with the power off) that it's snug in its slot. If your PC perks right up, which it should, venture into the BIOS-setup screen. Make sure your hard drive and optical drive have been detected, then set the optical drive to be the first boot device so you can boot right from the operating system installation CD.
Tip: While in the BIOS, look for a temperature gauge. Ideally, your processor and motherboard should be running no hotter than 50 degrees Celsius. If the numbers are higher, you may need to install another cooling fan.

7 Install the OS

Now you're ready to install an operating system, which, if you're like just about everyone else on the planet, will be Windows. Unfortunately, any upgrade copies of Windows XP you might own require an earlier version of the OS to be present on the drive—you'll have to use a full version of Windows XP Home or Professional. (Alas, Windows XP Media Center Edition isn't available for individual purchase, but see Step 8 for alternatives.) OS installation is a snap—just insert the CD and reboot. The system should boot from the CD and, from there, walk you through the setup.
Tip: If you already own the full version of, say, Windows 98, and have a Windows XP upgrade CD, install the former and then the latter. Sure, it'll take twice as long, but it'll save you big bucks on buying a full version of the OS.

8 Create a media center

If you're ready to turn your new SFF PC into a home theater center, check out SageTV 2.0 ($79.95, **www.sage.tv**) and SnapStream Beyond TV 3 ($69.99, **www.snapstream.com**). These programs offer a truly TiVo-like experience, letting you pause live TV programming, set up automatic recordings, and even stream shows to other PCs in your home. If you don't already have a TV-tuner card, both companies sell bundles that include software, the card, and a wireless remote. If you've opted for Linux, you can try Freevo **(freevo.sourceforge.net)**. As its name implies, it's a freebie.
Tip: No room inside your case for a TV-tuner card? USB to the rescue! Hauppauge's WinTV-PVR-usb2 ($199.99, **www.hauppauge.com**) gets the job done externally and even comes with a wireless remote.

The great thing about digital images is what you see does not have to be what you get.

Image-Beautification Project

BY JOHN WORAM

BACK IN 1988, Elton John sang the words, "...you can't argue with the image. The camera never lies." The camera still doesn't lie, but you can argue with what it says if the truth hurts. Here's a quick look at five common photographic truths you may wish to bend, with the help of a widely used photo-editing application, Adobe's Photoshop Elements ($99, **www.adobe.com**).

1 Amputate alien extremities

Often, when you're framing an image, you don't think about the positioning of background elements and how they end up attaching themselves to your subject. The lamppost growing out of the lady's head is a perfect example. Elements and most other editing packages have a tool that can duplicate nearby background information over the item you want to remove. It's referred to as cloning.

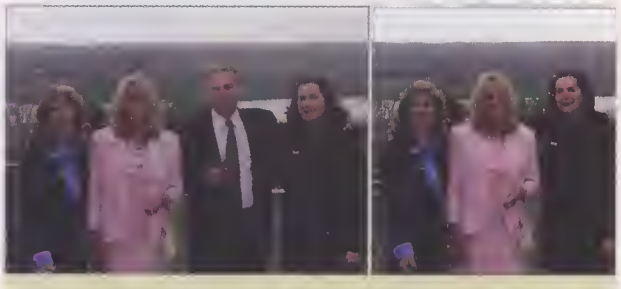
Use the Clone Stamp tool to select a suitable background area to clone over the lamppost.

To amputate the lamppost, select Element's Clone Stamp tool, hold down Alt, place the tool over the area you want to clone (in this case, the horizon to the left of the lamppost), and click to select that location. Release Alt and drag the cursor (which is now just a circle) across the lamp. The previously selected location is cloned over the lamp and replaced with sky and landscape. Proceed carefully until you've cloned the globe out of the sky. Then go back and clone away the section over the hills by repeating the Alt+click+drag procedure.

Tip: Use the left or right bracket keys to adjust the size of the cloning brush.

2 People remover

Had a tiff with Uncle Bob? Maybe it's time to extricate him from some family photos—you can always save the original if you kiss and make up. In our example, we used the Rectangular Marquee tool to select the woman in black. We included some of the area surrounding her, then hit copy (Ctrl+C) and paste (Ctrl+V) to create a new layer containing just the selected area. Using the Move tool, we dragged the new layer to the left, using the distant shoreline as a guide while moving it into position. For the moment, the lady in pink has lost her left arm, but that's easy to fix. In the Layers palette, we temporarily hid the new layer by clicking the eye at the left. Next we highlighted the background layer, selected the Magic Wand tool, and clicked in the general vicinity of the woman's left arm. With



You can remove out-of-favor relatives from family photos using the Rectangular Marquee tool and a wave of your Magic Wand.

Adobe's little "marching ants" parading around most of the area in pink and nowhere else, we turned the layer back on, selected it, and pressed Ctrl+X. This erases only the segment of the new layer that falls within that previously selected area on the background layer. In other words, we selected an area on one layer, then used it to erase an area on the other.

Next, we used the Eraser tool to remove any leftovers from the old layer, including Bob's hand on the lady in black's left shoulder. (For close work, zoom in on the image.) If parts of Uncle Bob's head were to reappear (remember, he's still there on that background layer), we could just use the clone tool on that layer to behead him. Finally, use the Crop tool to trim away the original lady in black on the right (unless you're going for a twin-sister effect).

Tip: When using the Marquee tool, if too much or not enough area is selected, adjust the Tolerance setting (about 50 percent should do it) and try again.

3 Color-cast correction

If you've just come back from the great outdoors only to discover your images have a bluish tinge, chances are you took some indoor shots earlier and forgot to change the camera to daylight exposure when you went outside. To chase those blues away, try your luck with Enhance > Auto Color Correction. It often does an excellent job all by itself, but if not, undo the correction by pressing Ctrl+Z, then scroll down to Adjust Color and select the Color Cast option. A Color Cast Correction dialog box appears, and the cursor becomes an eyedropper. Just click the eyedropper over an area that's supposed to be a neutral shade (white, gray, or black). Do a bit of experimenting, and if things don't work out, just press the Reset button and try again.

After a bit of color correction, the girl's skin tone takes on a healthier hue, the bricks are redder, and the window frames look whiter.

Tip: For more fine-tuning, try the Color Variations option within the Adjust Color submenu.

4 Build better backgrounds

An overly busy background distracts from the foreground, but now and then a background isn't busy enough, as in this photo of a Buenos Aires tomb seen against an empty blue sky. We needed to send in some clouds to add a bit of interest, and in this case it was easy. We just strolled outdoors when the cloud cover was just right and took a nice picture of the sky. We opened both files, selected the cloud photo, chose the Move tool, and dragged it over to the other image, creating a new layer on top of the original background layer. The Layers palette shows both layers, labeled Background and Layer 1. We clicked the Background layer and selected Layer > Duplicate Layer to create a Background Copy layer.

Some Long Island cloud cover imported onto a cloudless Argentine sky adds some interest to the scene.

Next, we dragged the Background Copy layer up on the palette so that it's above the cloud layer. Using the Magic Eraser tool (hold the mouse down over the Eraser tool), we clicked areas of solid blue sky until it all disappeared to reveal the cloud layer. Finally, we used the Move tool to slide the cloud layer around until it looked just right.

Tip: As a further enhancement, with the Background Copy layer selected, choose the Sponge tool, set the Mode to Saturate, and paint over the angel a few times to enhance the color.

5 Downsize your images

A file that's the right size to deliver a high-quality print is definitely the wrong size to post on the Web or send via e-mail. A 3,000x2,000-pixel JPEG image, for instance, may be about 3MB. If you print it at 300 pixels per inch, you'll get a nice 10-inch-wide print. But if you send it via e-mail, the recipient will have to view it in an image-editing application to be able to view the entire image on even the largest monitor. To spare your audience some grief, select Image > Resize > Image Size and change the width to, say, 600 pixels (with Constrain Proportions checked, the height automatically changes to 400 pixels, retaining the original's width/height ratio). Rename the new image so the original is still available for archiving and printing. The resized image will now be viewable, and the file size is probably less than one-tenth the original. To reduce the file size even further, select File > Save for Web. You'll see two side-by-side images, with the original on the left. Set the quality to zero, and note the file size shown below the image. If the image quality is not acceptable, move the quality slider gradually to the right until it is. When you reach an acceptable setting, the file size will still be lower than before, and your recipients will still be your friends.

Unless you resize images meant for printing, e-mail recipients will have to open an image-editing app to see more of this handsome iguana than its eyeball.

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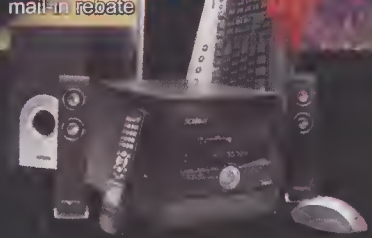

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Should iSpring for an iPod?

For $300, can anyone play sweeter tunes than Apple's juggernaut audio player? The Advisor investigates.

"JUST BUY AN IPOD!" That's the unanimous advice Gajtana Simonovski hears about buying a digital music player. And with sales of slick fourth-generation iPods booming, it's hard to argue with Apple's white-earbud brigade. But she's seen competing devices, and she's curious.

"I'm a cautious buyer," she says. "When I got my first cell phone in 2000, a friend congratulated me on joining the 1990s." Still, she's resolutely digital: She has 200 CDs to rip, and is adding more all the time. She wants a USB-compatible player to use on the treadmill (placed on its stationary shelf, cushioned by a towel), in her car (wired to the CD player and Velcroed to the dash), and around town. She's happy to rip her own CDs rather than buy tracks online. And her budget is right at the current market sweet spot: $300.

First, some rough math. To minimize quality loss, Simonovski wants to rip her music as 160Kbps or 192Kbps MP3s. At either rate, 200 CDs (estimating 50 minutes per CD) would occupy a bit more than 10GB of space. Also, she doesn't want to traffic music on and off her player every day, so that rules out a low-capacity, tiny flash-memory player.

Simonovski could cut down dramatically on song-loading sessions with an ultracompact hard drive player. This class, pioneered by Apple's $249 killer-cute 4GB **iPod Mini (www.apple.com)**, isn't quite as small as a flash player, but it represents a better cost-per-meg value. Rio has an anti-Mini missile it calls the **Carbon (www.rioaudio.com)**, which, for the same price, ups the capacity to 5GB. The metal-cased player has the noncheap feel of an iPod, but Rio backs it with a stingy 90-day warranty—too short for *any* device containing a hard drive. (Apple's is one year.) And even 5GB isn't enough to house Simonovski's whole music collection. Because she didn't emphasize portability, we decided her bucks would be better spent on a bulkier but roomier 20GB jukebox-style player that sells for the same price or a little more.

Apple iPod (20GB)

At a Mini-identical $249.99, Creative Labs' **Zen Touch (www.creativelabs.com)** stows 20GB—five times the tunes. Its metal/gloss-white motif telegraphs its inspiration, and its scrolling control, a touch strip the size of a small Band-Aid, is an okay alternative to the iPod's Click Wheel. Our labs squeezed a whopping 26 hours of battery life from the Zen, almost double the latest iPod's. It's fatter than the new 20GB iPod, though, and although the screen is readable, it's not as vibrant as Apple's. Also, we found playlist management tricky.

Gajtana Simonovski

THE CHALLENGE

User profile: Gajtana Simonovski, project manager from Queens, N.Y.

Computing needs: An under-$300 hard drive music player that can host MP3s of some (or all) of her 200 CDs.

THE SOLUTION

The Advisor's choice: We gave the competition its due, but there's still no beating the Apple iPod (here, the $299 20GB version) on case aesthetics, intuitive interface, and quirky-yet-addictive features.

Far from iPod-minimalist is the 20GB **H120** from iRiver **(www.iriveramerica.com)**. Known for feature-dense players with equally dense interfaces, iRiver stays the course here. Still, at around $290, the H120 is a marvel, packing standard features the Mini, iPod, and Zen don't, including FM radio, line-in recording (for quick-and-dirty digitizing of analog tapes/LPs), and a sophisticated backlit LCD/remote on the headphone cord. Plus, tweakers will delight in customizing a boggling array of EQ and interface minutiae. The H120 is the clear choice if you're a serious audio buff or often record live music. Plus, we love the screen—big, blue-backlit, and overflowing with track, EQ, and playback details. But beware its micromenus: Three tiny edge buttons and a clickable joystick navigate a witch's forest of menus and boxes lovable only to eagle-eyed geeks. Also, the iRiver Music Manager desktop software is festooned with head-scratch-inducing icons.

Last, we auditioned Apple's fourth-gen 20GB **iPod** ($299, **www.apple.com**). It adopts the Mini's finger-friendly Click Wheel, which absorbs myriad functions into a directional pad/touch-sensitive disc and a central button. The iPod also scores props for its intuitive chunky-text interface and being wedded to the superb iTunes. It lacks line-in or voice recording, but several extras—games, an address book, even a name-that-tune quiz—set it apart. And on design, no contest—the iPod simply feels worth a premium for its solid, hyperpolished exterior, überminimal controls, and snap-simple interface. Still, we noted minor gotchas: no support for WMA files, and no case.

Audio quality was excellent on all these devices using our reference Grado headphones—only audiophiles would quibble, because they'd scorn *any* compressed audio. Beyond that, infighting raged among our inner geek, aesthete, and cheapskate. The Zen shines, if only from a pure-value standpoint, but because Simonovski's willing to spend the whole $300—and isn't an audio extremist—we accede to popular opinion. The H120's feature list makes it a close second, but the iPod's is competitive, and its minimalist-yet-deep aesthetics flat-out steamroll the field. Our advice: Follow the white-earbud zombies.

If you need help making a smart buying decision, e-mail buying_advisor@cnet.com.

Internet Calling: Should You Answer?

WITH TODAY'S CELL PHONES capable of doing just about everything but shampooing your poodle, the landline phone has become a quaint, sleepy little device. But Voice over IP (VoIP) telephone service is now being marketed in retail tech stores, and some believe it will place a wake-up call to the traditional telecommunications market.

VoIP leader Vonage **(www.vonage.com)** recently connected with Linksys **(www.linksys.com)** and Netgear **(www.netgear.com)**, and is selling the home-networking heavyweights' phone adapters from its Web site. Staples, Office Depot, Circuit City, and CompUSA are also selling the phone adapter/VoIP service packages. On-the-shelf exposure like this could consumerize the technology, but only if VoIP is ready for consumers.

To find out, I tried Vonage's service using a Linksys phone adapter, and I was pleasantly surprised. Setup was brain-dead simple, call quality was indistinguishable from that of my landline Verizon service, and Vonage's calling features are intuitive and useful.

VoIP is easy to use and delivers great voice quality at a good price. The downside? Its 911 service is sketchy.

My $14.99 monthly plan offers 500 minutes of local or long-distance calls and a boatload of free services. A great deal, but remember you need a broadband Internet connection to use VoIP.

Setup couldn't be easier: I just plugged the $59 PAP2 phone adapter into my router and connected a plain-Jane telephone to the adapter. There was no software to install. Unfortunately, there was no dial tone, either.

Settling in for what I predicted would be an epic installation session, I checked my network wiring, disconnected and reconnected the adapter and phone, and waited. After a few minutes, I picked up the phone and heard that familiar tone.

Patience, it turns out, is key. When you first plug in the phone adapter, it connects to Vonage's site to register the number and download firmware patches, a process that takes several minutes. You can establish a number in any area code you choose. I live in 212, for instance, but I have family in 979; if I set up my account using that area code, all calls they make to me would be local.

Next, I noodled around Vonage's intuitive Web interface to configure voice mail, call forwarding, e-mail notification of messages, and 911 service. The 911 service is not the service as we know it, however. You can register your home location, but if you take the phone adapter on the road and call from someplace else, the dispatcher won't know where you are. You'd have to reregister your location, which takes a couple of days. Worse, suffering a power or Internet outage means no phone service. This could be dangerous to those who have sketchy broadband services or who live in areas prone to electrical outages.

Internet phone service comes with other caveats. It requires 64Kbps to 128Kbps of upstream bandwidth, and because broadband's upstream pipe is typically smaller than the downstream, large uploads from your network during a call can mangle voice quality. To test this, I e-mailed a 1.5MB photo while talking to a friend in Arizona; she couldn't detect a difference. I downloaded songs from iTunes Music Store, and, again, call quality was unaffected. When I uploaded a 6MB file, however, she commented on the distorted Tron-like quality of my voice.

This—and the larger issue of 911 service and potential outages—are the biggest drawbacks to VoIP. Less critical is the clutter of an additional box next to your broadband modem and router. By the time you read this, router/phone-adapter combo units will be available. Besides halting the ever-encroaching desktop-box proliferation, these units will offer Quality of Service (QOS) features that prioritize voice packets over data packets to ensure maximum call quality.

My VoIP setup comprised (from left) a phone, phone adapter, router, and cable modem.

In the meantime, if you're considering Internet calling, here are a few pointers:

- Make sure you have a reliable broadband provider.
- VoIP may work better with cable than DSL.
- 911 via VoIP is sketchy. Until this issue is resolved, retain an alternate means of reaching 911.
- When setting up the hardware, leave it turned on for 10 minutes, then power down and restart your PC.

So is VoIP really ready for prime time? If you can live with a few limitations and already have reliable broadband, I'd say definitely yes. It's easy to set up, the call quality is excellent, and the price is right.

Rik Fairlie is editor of Computer Shopper. *Contact him at* **rik.fairlie@cnet.com.**

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If It Smells Bad, It Must Be Phish

A GOOD FRIEND CALLED the other day, concerned he'd done something very stupid. The man is a lawyer and by no means a dummy, so I couldn't imagine it could be that bad. "Well," he said. "I got an e-mail from AOL requesting a verification of my password, and I gave it to them." Okay, not very intelligent.

Some very bright people are falling for these scams, so I figured it's time to ring the warning bell. The two I've seen the most take aim at eBay and Citibank account holders. One eBay message I got had the following warning:

It has come to our attention that your eBay account was accessed recently from three different location. [tip-off number one] *Please update your personal records within 48 hours. Failure to update your records will result in account suspension.*

Aside from the grammatical error, the warning sure seemed legit. And the link for updating my records led to a page that felt just like a genuine eBay page.

The Citibank e-mail was a bigger concern, because the bank, in its overzealous attempts to deter identity theft, had suspended my account once before. (I used my card to pay for a hotel in Cooperstown. I'm usually not the one who pays for such things, but it was a birthday gift for my baseball-fanatic husband. The representative told me next time I plan on going away, I should tell Citibank first. No fooling.) Here's what the message said:

> Thieves are using e-mail to sucker you out of your passwords and PINs. Don't be a victim.

Recently there have been a large number computer [okay, another tip-off] *terrorist attacks over our database server. In order to safeguard your account, we require that you update your Citibank ATM/Debit card PIN.*

This update is requested of you as a precautionary measure against fraud. Please note that we have no particular indications that your details have been compromised in any way.

This process is mandatory, and if not completed within the nearest time your account may be subject to temporary suspension.

Please make sure you have your Citibank ATM/Debit card and your login details at hand.

The Customer Verification Form link through which you could "securely update your Citibank ATM/Debit card PIN" led to a very Citi-looking Web page. But things are not always as they seem.

DON'T GET FOOLED

Let's start with the eBay e-mail. I right-clicked the "sign-in" URL within the e-mail, selected View Source, and saw that the actual URL was for an IP address of 81.196.189.1, which is not an eBay sign-in page. I plugged this into Network Solutions' Whois directory **(www.networksolutions.com/en_US/whois)** and learned the party receiving that sign-in information is located in Amsterdam. I did the same thing with the Citibank e-mail and discovered the IP address belonged to an outfit in Milton, Australia.

These phony warnings are called by many names, among them fakes, spoofs, and phishers, and scam artists have been carpet-bombing the Internet in hopes a fair number would hit the right targets. Their goal is to steal your account information and PINs, and they're often very convincing. The best advice: Ignore them all, and never, under any circumstances, "update" your personal information in response to an e-mail request. In fact, don't even click on a link, because doing so could secretly load a program that logs all your keystrokes. If you're losing sleep worrying about whether your information truly has been compromised, look for fraud or security information on the company's Web site.

The "Consumer Alert: beware of fraudulent e-mails" link on Citibank's Web site offers lots of tips for sniffing out spoofs. Some clues that a message may be fake include some sort of warning (your account will be closed or suspended), embedded links that lead to phony sites, and spelling errors (these help spoofers slip past spam filters). Poor grammar is another indication. If you're in doubt, Citibank recommends going to its site to see if you can get to the link in the e-mail from there. A full list of Citibank URLs is available on the site. The company also spells out what it does and does not do via e-mail—and it clearly states it does not send urgent or time-sensitive e-mails, or those that ask you to provide, update, or confirm sensitive data. So the next time crooks come phishing for your personal information, don't get hooked.

Illustration by David Flaherty

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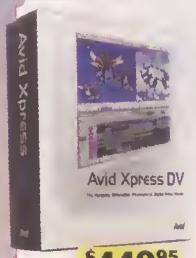

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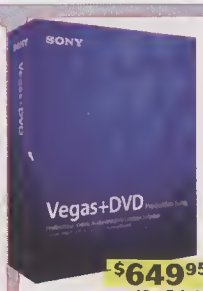

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BUDGET DESKTOPS $749 AND LESS

NEED TO KNOW

PROCESSOR You'll pay a premium for the fastest processor, so go with a CPU several cycles behind the top clock speed. It will save you money, yet still yield a PC plenty fast for everyday tasks. Upgrade: Expect to spend $50 for every 200MHz-increment upgrade of Intel processors.

GRAPHICS As a rule, budget PCs use integrated graphics that share system memory and can't handle complex games and graphics. Look for a desktop with an AGP or x16 PCI Express (PCIe) slot, which lets you add a dedicated card later. Upgrade: A basic graphics card costs about $60 more than integrated graphics.

MEMORY Get at least 512MB of RAM, especially if you multitask. You can get by with 256MB, but it may slow you down, especially if the PC employs integrated graphics. Upgrade: Each additional 256MB of DDR memory will cost roughly $60.

HARD DRIVE Go for at least an 80GB drive, although more is better. Faster is also better—look for a spin rate of at least 5,400rpm. Upgrade: Each additional 40GB of storage will cost about $36.

OPTICAL DRIVES Two optical drives (CD-RW, DVD-ROM, recordable-DVD) are better than one. If you can afford only one drive, make it a DVD±RW. Upgrade: A DVD±RW drive costs about $70 more than a CD-RW drive.

CASE Most budget PCs use minitower or midtower cases. If you think you'll want to upgrade or add components later, make sure the case has room for expansion.

SOUND AND SPEAKERS You'll be hard-pressed to find anything but motherboard-integrated sound. This is fine for general use but underpowered for listening at loud levels, and it may not support surround sound. Don't expect quality speakers, either. A three-piece system (two satellites and a subwoofer) is possible, but a two-piece set is the norm. Upgrade: A quality sound card will cost about $70 more than onboard audio.

MONITOR With flat-panel prices falling, adding a 15-inch LCD won't cost you a mint. If you want more screen real estate, you'll either have to kick in more cash or forgo the flat panel altogether and choose a CRT.

—Joshua Goldman, Desktop Editor

Model	Base Price*	Processor	RAM	Graphics	Hard Drive	Optical Drive(s)	Monitor	Editor's Take	Find Out More
ABS COMPUTER TECHNOLOGIES									
Explorer Workstation 1000	$549	2.4GHz Celeron	256MB	Integrated	40GB	DVD-RDM	None	This PC is strictly business—don't expect much more than Web, e-mail, and office tasks.	www.ahspc.com 800-876-8088
Explorer Workstation 1100	$657.50	1.83GHz Athlon XP 2500+	256MB	nVidia GeForce FX 5200	80GB	DVD-RDM	None	Good for SOHO users; the discrete graphics card with TV-out is a bonus.	
Harmony 1000	$749	2.4GHz Pentium 4	512MB	Integrated	80GB	DVD-RDM	None	Reasonably able components, but at this price you should expect discrete graphics.	
CYBERPOWER									
Gamer Xtreme 6000 Lightning	$615	2.13GHz Athlon XP 2600+	512MB	ATI Radeon 9200 SE	120GB	DVD-RDM, CD-RW	None	Nice features for the price, but consider upgrading the graphics for "xtreme" gaming.	www.cyberpowerpc.com 800-707-0393
AMD Value 2000 XP	$743	1.83 GHz Athlon XP 2500+	512MB	nVidia GeForce4 MX 4000	40GB	CD-RW	19-inch CRT	Included monitor is a plus, but otherwise limited specs for price; better deals are out there.	
DELL									
Dimension 2400	$633	2.8GHz Pentium 4	256MB	Integrated	80GB	CD-RW	17-inch CRT	A good name at a good price. Increase the RAM, and you're in business.	www.dell.com 800-624-6139
Dimension 4600	$719	2.8GHz Pentium 4	512MB	Integrated	40GB	DVD-RDM	17-inch CRT	With some midrange specs for a budget price, a true entry-level bargain.	
EMACHINES									
T2824	$449	2.5GHz Celeron	256MB	Integrated	40GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	None	Enough power for basic tasks, but don't expect much more from this entry-level system.	www.emachines.com 801-401-1419
T2958	$549	2.67GHz Celeron D 330	512MB	Integrated	80GB	DVD-RDM, CD-RW	None	A starter for the term-paper set. Heartier specs are worth the extra $100 over the T2824.	
T3092	$649	2.17GHz Athlon XP 3000+	512MB	Integrated	160GB	DVD±RW, CD-RDM	None	Spec for spec, simply one of the best budget systems you can buy.	

= Editors' Choice * Base price reflects vendor's default configuration. Most models are configurable.

TECHMARKET BUDGET DESKTOPS $749 AND LESS

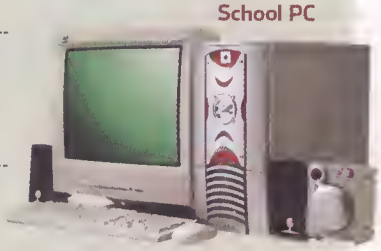
Model	Base Price*	Processor	RAM	Graphics	Hard Drive	Optical Drive(s)	Monitor	Editor's Take	Find Out More
GATEWAY									
310B	$549.95	2.8GHz Celeron	256MB	Integrated	40GB	CD-ROM	17-inch CRT	Unless you're just looking for a word processor with Web access, upgrade to the 310T.	www.gateway.com 800-369-1409
310T	$599.99	2.8GHz Pentium 4	256MB	Integrated	40GB	CD-ROM	17-inch CRT	A reasonable deal on an inexpensive PC that includes a 17-inch monitor.	
310S	$649.99	2.8GHz Celeron	512MB	Integrated	80GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	17-inch CRT	A big hard drive and a decent amount of RAM make this PC a good budget buy.	
HEWLETT-PACKARD									
Pavilion a600y	$449	2.53GHz Celeron D 325	256MB	Integrated	40GB	CD-RW	None	You get what you pay for—in this case, a no-frills entry-level box.	www.hp.com 888-999-4747
Compaq Presario SR1D10V	$458.99	2.53GHz Celeron D 325	256MB	Integrated	40GB	CD-ROM	None	Compaq Presario line targets business users, but this budget PC is best for basics.	
Pavilion a650e	$739.99	2GHz Athlon 64 3200+	256MB	nVidia GeForce FX 5100	80GB	DVD-ROM	None	The 64-bit processor makes this model worth checking out, but boost the RAM to 512MB.	
IBM									
IBM ThinkCentre A Series	$389	2.4GHz Celeron	128MB	Integrated	40GB	CD-ROM	None	IBM quality at a low price for undemanding computing tasks; needs a RAM boost.	www.ibm.com 888-426-5800
IBUYPOWER									
AMD Best Buy	$559	2GHz Athlon XP 2500+	512MB	Integrated	80GB	DVD-RDM, CD-RW	None	Attractive entry-level specs at a sweet price, including dual optical drives.	www.ibuypower.com 888-462-3899
Power Best Buy	$679	2.8GHz Pentium 4	512MB	nVidia GeForce4 MX 4000	80GB	DVD-ROM	None	You're paying a premium for the Intel processor, but discrete graphics is a bonus.	
SONY ELECTRONICS									
VAIO Digital Studio RS Series	$699.99	2.6GHz Celeron	256MB	ATI Radeon 9200	80GB	DVD-ROM, CD-RW	None	An extra 256MB of RAM will let you do even more with this budget multimedia box.	www.sony.com/pc18 888-496-7669
SYSTEMAX									
Venture LP	$349.99	2.66GHz Celeron D 330	128MB	Integrated	40GB	CD-ROM	None	Rock-bottom price with equally low components. Upgrade the RAM, at a minimum.	www.systemaxpc.com 888-845-6225
Ascent Pro	$359.99	2GHz Athlon XP 2400+	128MB	Integrated	40GB	CD-ROM	None	Basic computing at a good price, but you'll want to boost RAM to at least 256MB.	
VELOCITY MICRO									
Voyager	$589	2.4GHz Celeron	128MB	Integrated	40GB	DVD-ROM	None	A bargain-basement box that needs a memory boost to get the thumbs-up.	www.velocitymicro.com 800-303-7866
Vector	$739	2.08GHz Athlon XP 2800+	256MB	nVidia GeForce4 MX 440	40GB	DVD-ROM	None	The budget-price AMD CPU allows for more memory and a discrete graphics card.	
ZT GROUP									
Pro X6461	$569	2.8GHz Pentium 4	256MB	Integrated	80GB	CD-RW	None	Pentium 4 processor, CD burner, and 80GB drive make this PC a viable option.	www.ztgroup.com 866-984-7687

THE BEST RECENTLY REVIEWED BUDGET DESKTOPS

Monarch Sempron 3100+ System Special • $739 • Editors' Rating: 8.0**
Employing AMD's new budget Sempron processor, this PC hits a sweet spot between performance and price, offering plenty of power for everyday tasks. (See full review on p. 36.)

Systemax Ascent 64 • $742 • Editors' Rating: 7.7**
AMD's Athlon 64 3000+ processor allows this budget model to ably serve both home and small-business users, but a memory boost up from the skimpy 256MB would go a long way.

iBuypower Back To School PC • $745 • Editors' Rating: 7.7**
This inexpensive workhorse ditches the beige box and replaces it with flash. Plus, this looker will get you through your courses and extracurricular diversions.



iBuypower Back To School PC

= Editors' Choice * Base price reflects vendor's default configuration. Most models are configurable. ** Configuration has changed since original review. Monitor and speakers not included.

MIDRANGE DESKTOPS $750 TO $1,499

NEED TO KNOW

PROCESSOR Don't choose an underpowered processor: Getting a CPU that's one or two steps down from the fastest will give you the power you need at a good price. Upgrade: Expect to spend $90 for every 200MHz-increment upgrade of Intel 3GHz and faster processors.

MEMORY 512MB of memory is standard, but if you can afford 1GB, go for it. Otherwise, make the 512MB a single DIMM; you'll then have more flexibility to add memory later. Upgrade: Each additional 256MB of DDR memory will cost roughly $60.

GRAPHICS Look for a discrete graphics card with at least 64MB of memory. If you plan to do video editing or 3D gaming, go with at least 128MB of memory. Upgrade: A premium graphics card costs about $220 more than integrated graphics.

HARD DRIVE Protecting your data is increasingly important, so opt for two hard drives of at least 80GB apiece, configured in a RAID Level 1 array to ensure that your data is always backed up. Upgrade: Each additional 40GB of storage will cost about $36.

OPTICAL DRIVES A DVD±RW is your first choice. Two drives are better than one, though, so go with a fast CD-RW or DVD-ROM for the second.

CASE Be certain the case offers adequate expansion room. Also, look for a few front-panel USB ports, a FireWire connection, and audio jacks. Upgrade: Robust power supplies (400 watts and higher) will add $50 or more to the price.

SOUND AND SPEAKERS Integrated sound is common, but better than you'll find in budget desktops. You can expect 5.1-channel surround-sound capability and rear and front audio inputs. A dedicated sound card, however, is still a better choice. As for speakers, unless you really want surround sound, opt for a good three-piece set. Upgrade: A quality sound card will cost about $70 more than onboard audio.

MONITOR A CRT delivers more viewing space for a few hundred dollars less than similarly sized LCDs. But it's hard to deny the appeal of an attractive, space-saving LCD, so the choice may hinge on your budget and space constraints. Upgrade: 17-inch LCD monitors start as low as $400.

—Joshua Goldman, Desktop Editor

Model	Base Price*	Processor	RAM	Graphics	Hard Drive	Optical Drive(s)	Monitor	Editor's Take	Find Out More
ABS COMPUTER TECHNOLOGIES									
Awesome 4300	$899	1.8GHz Athlon 64 2800+	512MB	nVidia GeForce FX 5200	80GB	DVD-ROM, CD-RW	None	An awesome package that should deliver solid midrange performance.	www.abspc.com 800-876-8088
Awesome 4500	$1,099	2.8GHz Pentium 4	512MB	nVidia GeForce FX 5700	120GB	DVD±RW, DVD-ROM	None	A large hard drive and DVD burner are good, but adding RAM would make it great.	
APPLE COMPUTER									
eMac	$799	1.25GHz Power PC G4	256MB	ATI Radeon 9200	40GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	17-inch CRT	A favorite of schools everywhere, this is the inexpensive way to make the Mac switch.	www.apple.com 800-692-7753
iMac	$1,299	1.6GHz PowerPC G5	256MB	Integrated	80GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	17-inch LCD	A seriously stylish desktop with a cool adjustable LCD and a superfast G5 CPU.	
CYBERPOWER									
Titanium 9000 Supreme	$859	2.8GHz Pentium 4	512MB	ATI Radeon 9600	160GB	DVD-ROM, CD-RW	None	Cool white case houses a PC that will accommodate entry-level gamers, average users.	www.cyberpowerpc.com 800-707-0393
Gamer Infinity 8000 Dream	$1,025	2.8GHz Pentium 4	512MB	nVidia GeForce PCX 5750	160GB	DVD-RW, CD-RW	None	Average components, but the dual optical drives are a plus. Lacks a monitor, however.	
Gamer Infinity 8900 Deluxe	$1,085	3GHz Pentium 4	512MB	nVidia GeForce FX 5700	160GB	DVD+RW, DVD-ROM	19-inch CRT	A solid system for midrange gamers. You get a lot for the price.	
DELL									
Dimension 4600C	$899	2.8GHz Pentium 4	256MB	Integrated	40GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	17-inch CRT	A nice compact chassis, but the components are a little pricey for what you get.	www.dell.com 800-624-6139
Dimension 8400	$1,028	3GHz Pentium 4	512MB	ATI Radeon X300 SE	160GB	DVD-ROM	17-inch CRT	One small tweak: add a second optical drive for burning CDs, DVDs, or both. Then we're sold.	
GATEWAY									
510S	$999	3GHz Pentium 4	512MB	Integrated	160GB	DVD±RW	None	We love the DVD burner, but we're not down with integrated graphics in a $1,000 system.	www.gateway.com 800-369-1409
510G	$1,099	3GHz Pentium 4	512MB	nVidia GeForce FX 5200G	160GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	19-inch CRT	Gateway's gamer-for-beginners; a pretty good configuration for the cash.	

TECHMARKET MIDRANGE DESKTOPS $750 TO $1,499

Model	Base Price*	Processor	RAM	Graphics	Hard Drive	Optical Drive(s)	Monitor	Editor's Take	Find Out More
HEWLETT-PACKARD									
Compaq Presario SA40DDT	$1,083	2.8GHz Pentium 4	512MB	ATI Radeon X300 SE	80GB	DVD+RW, CD-RW	None	Discrete graphics, a zippy CPU, and a healthy dose of RAM make this PC a good value.	www.hp.com 888-999-4747
Media Center m1000y PhotoSmart	$1,124	2.8GHz Pentium 4	512MB	nVidia GeForce FX 5500	80GB	DVD+RW, CD-ROM	None	A decent price for a Windows Media Center PC, but spring for a bigger hard drive.	
IBM									
ThinkCentre M Series	$969	2.8GHz Pentium 4	256MB	Integrated	40GB	CD-ROM	None	A compact gem for serious business types, but the base config could be heartier.	www.ibm.com 888-426-5800
ThinkCentre S Series	$999	2.8GHz Pentium 4	256MB	Integrated	40GB	CD-ROM	None	Enterprise-ready, small, and easily serviced, but, considering the feature set, the price is high.	
IBUYPOWER									
DVD-Pro	$999	2.25GHz Athlon XP 2800+	512MB	nVidia GeForce FX 5700	160GB	DVD±RW	19-inch CRT	Lots of good stuff here for less than $1,000. A capable general-purpose system.	www.ibuypower.com 888-462-3899
Dream 2004	$1,089	2.8GHz Pentium 4	512MB	nVidia GeForce FX 5500	160GB	DVD±RW	19-inch CRT	The overall configuration is robust for the price.	
Gamer's Supreme	$1,195	2.8GHz Pentium 4	512MB	ATI Radeon 9600	120GB	DVD+RW, DVD-ROM	19-inch CRT	"Gamer" yes, "supreme" not so much. Up the graphics card to the 256MB Radeon.	
SONY ELECTRONICS									
PCV-RS600C Series	$1,018	3GHz Pentium 4	512MB	ATI Radeon 9200	120GB	DVD±RW, CD-ROM	None	You'll get able midrange parts and high style with this Sony; an attractive package overall.	www.sony.com/pc18 888-496-7669
SYSTEMAX									
Gaming PC	$1,191	2GHz Athlon 64 3200+	1GB	ATI Radeon 9800 SE	80GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	None	A 64-bit processor and 1GB of memory makes for a gaming PC that's frag-worthy for the price.	www.systemaxpc.com 888-845-6225
VELOCITY MICRO									
Vision 64 AMD Enthusiast Platform	$1,290	2GHz Athlon 64 3200+	512MB	nVidia GeForce FX 5700LE	120GB	DVD-ROM, CD-RW	None	Should get the job done. CPU and components will keep you running up to speed for a while.	www.velocitymicro.com 800-303-7866
ProMagix Intel Enthusiast Platform	$1,290	2.8GHz Pentium 4	512MB	ATI Radeon 9600	120GB	DVD-ROM, CD-RW	None	Not quite cream of the crop, but as it stands, a solid mix for a midrange system.	
ZT GROUP									
A5314	$949	1.8GHz Athlon 64 2800+	512MB	ATI Radeon 9600 XT	120GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	None	These specs are passable, but at this price, it should really include a display.	www.ztgroup.com 866-984-7687
Pro X6464	$999	3.2GHz Pentium 4	512MB	nVidia GeForce FX 5200	120GB	DVD±RW	None	A sound PC decision as long as you don't have high-performance gaming in mind.	
Pro 6486	$1,299	3GHz Pentium 4	512MB	ATI Radeon X600 XT	160GB	DVD±RW, DVD-ROM	None	With lots of storage and a new, fast graphics card, all you need is a monitor and 5.1 speakers.	

THE BEST RECENTLY REVIEWED MIDRANGE DESKTOPS

HP Compaq Business Desktop DC7100 • $1,239 • Editors' Rating: 8.3**
A strong performer with a flexible design and an excellent warranty, this PC is perfect for corporate environments.

Dell Dimension 4700 • $1,496 • Editors' Rating: 7.6
This mainstream machine is an affordable, forward-looking PC well-suited for a home or small office.

IBM ThinkCentre A50 • $1,424 • Editors' Rating: 7.1
A solid buy for businesses looking for a good deal and smart design rather than the latest technology.

IBM ThinkCentre A50

= Editors' Choice * Base price reflects vendor's default configuration. Most models are configurable. ** Monitor not included

www.shuttle.com

Shuttle XPC G5 9500 System

The PC of the future

Don't be fooled by its size, the Shuttle XPC G5 9500 is one of the highest performance PC's ever. Available with an AMD Athlon FX-53 processor, the G5 9500 makes mincemeat out of games and content creation applications.

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PERFORMANCE DESKTOPS $1,500 AND HIGHER

NEED TO KNOW

PROCESSOR Power users need the best. Go with a top-notch Intel or AMD processor. You'll have maximum power and the best protection possible from system extinction.

MEMORY Start with 1GB and make sure your motherboard supports 2GB or even 4GB. Upgrade: Each additional 256MB of DDR memory will cost roughly $60.

GRAPHICS Make sure you're running a high-end card with a minimum of 128MB of memory. Bump that up to 256MB if you can afford it.

HARD DRIVE Start with two hard drives in a RAID Level 0 array for quick file access and fast application launching. For storage, get a third drive of 120GB or larger. Upgrade: Each additional 40GB of storage will cost about $36.

OPTICAL DRIVES What's better than one DVD±RW? Two—but that's complete overkill. Stick with one DVD burner, and then either a CD-RW or DVD-ROM for a second drive. Upgrade: A second DVD±RW drive will cost about $70 more than a CD-RW.

CASE Performance PCs need space for both components and cooling, so get a full tower. Make sure airflow is adequate and there's room for growth. Also, look for upfront USB, FireWire, and audio inputs for easy access. A multiformat memory-card reader may be an option, too.

SOUND AND SPEAKERS Definitely go for a dedicated sound card. Included speakers should take full advantage of the sound card's abilities. Most top cards support immersive 7.1-channel surround sound; whether you want seven or eight speakers is your call.

MONITOR Hard-core gamers insist on CRTs for their superior resolution, clarity, and color. If you go with an LCD, make sure it has a response time of 25 milliseconds (ms) or less; 16ms is optimal for gaming. Upgrade: A 19-inch CRT will cost about $500 less than a 19-inch LCD monitor.

—Joshua Goldman, Desktop Editor

Model	Base Price*	Processor	RAM	Graphics	Hard Drive	Optical Drive(s)	Monitor	Editor's Take	Find Out More
ABS COMPUTER TECHNOLOGIES									
Harmony 3000	$1,519	2.8GHz Pentium 4	512MB	nVidia GeForce FX 5700	120GB	DVD±RW	None	Components could be a little more robust, but a nice price for a Media Center PC.	www.abspc.com 800-876-8088
Awesome 5500	$1,599	3GHz Pentium 4	1GB	ATI Radeon 9800 Pro	120GB (two)	DVD±RW, DVD-ROM	None	Game on! A solid midrange gaming rig with a decent price tag.	
Awesome 6300	$2,549	2.4GHz Athlon 64 FX-53	1GB	ATI Radeon 9800 Pro	120GB	DVD±RW, DVD-ROM	None	One of the best gaming CPUs on the market. Serious players will want better graphics.	
ALIENWARE									
★ Area 51	$1,552	2.8GHz Pentium 4 520	512MB	nVidia GeForce PCX 5750	80GB	DVD-ROM	None	Specs could be better at this price. An average box that a few key upgrades would make tempting.	www.alienware.com 800-254-3692
Aurora	$1,782	2.2GHz Athlon 64 3500+	512MB	ATI Radeon 9600 XT	80GB	DVD-ROM	None	Alienware builds awesome high-end PCs, and this one is pretty affordable.	
APPLE COMPUTER									
PowerMac G5	$1,999	Dual 1.8GHz PowerPC G5	256MB	nVidia GeForce FX 5200 Ultra	80GB	DVD-R	None	A sleek machine with looks and power to spare, but a little pricey compared with Windows PCs.	www.apple.com 800-692-7753
CYBERPOWER									
Gamer Infinity 9900 Pro	$1,609	3.2GHz Pentium 4	1GB	nVidia GeForce 6800	160GB	DVD±RW, DVD-ROM	19-inch CRT	Nicely configured for the money, including a scorcher of a graphics card and a workable display.	www.cyberpowerpc.com 800-707-0393
Graphic GL X2 Professional	$2,355	2.6GHz Xeon	1GB	ATI FireGL X2	120GB	DVD±RW, DVD-ROM	None	An everyday PC this isn't. Unless you're a graphics pro, its power may be overkill.	
DELL									
★ Dimension XPS	$1,798	3.2GHz Pentium 4 540	512MB	ATI Radeon X800 SE	80GB	DVD+RW, DVD-ROM	17-inch CRT	Gaming for the masses. A good starting point from a vendor known for value and service.	www.dell.com 800-624-6139
FALCON NORTHWEST									
Talon	$1,895	2GHz Athlon 64 3200+	1GB	nVidia GeForce FX 5950 Ultra	120GB	DVD±RW, DVD-ROM	None	Not as slick as the Mach V, but at this price with these parts, a deal worth considering.	www.falcon-nw.com 888-325-2661
Mach V	$2,095	2GHz Athlon 64 3000+	512MB	nVidia GeForce 6800	80GB	DVD-ROM	None	Pretty powerful, and powerfully pretty. Falcon's Talon wins the value-for-money race, however.	
FragBox 2	$2,656	3.2GHz Pentium 4 540	1GB	nVidia GeForce 6800 Ultra	80GB	DVD-ROM	None	Great for gamers on the go, but you pay a premium for squeezing everything into a portable box.	

★ = Editors' Choice * Base price reflects vendor's default configuration. Most models are configurable.

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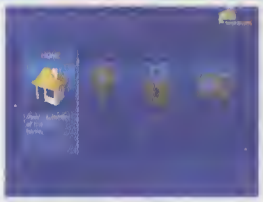

M1 - Digital Home System

- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 3.0GHz with HT Technology
- Intel® 0865PCOL MATX Motherboard
- Aluminum Media Center Chassis w/350W Silent Power Supply
- 256MB Kingston DDR SORAM at 400MHz
- 120GB Western Digital 7200 RPM Hard Drive
- MSI Personal Cinema PC5200-VT12B
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Media Center Edition 2004 w/TV Tuner & Remote Control
- Optional HOME CONTROL SYSTEM (call for details)
- 3 Year Limited Warranty

$899.00

M2 - Digital Home System

- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 530 with HT Technology (3GHz, 1MB L2 Cache, B00MHz)
- Intel® 0915 GUXL MATX Motherboard
- Intel® High Definition 6-Channel Audio
- Aluminum Media Center Case w/350W Silent Power Supply
- 512MB Kingston 00R2 at 533MHz
- 200GB Western Digital SATA150 Hard Drive
- PCI EXPRESS Nvidia GeForce 6600GT w/12BMB 00R1
- 16X Dual-Layer DVD-RW
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Media Center Edition 2004 w/DUAL TV TUNER & Remote Control
- Optional HOME CONTROL SYSTEM (call for details)
- 3 Year Limited Warranty

$1599.00

A557 - Notebook Computer

- Intel® Pentium® M 1.5GHz Processor 3.0GHz
- Intel® Centrino® Mobile Technology
- 256MB Kingston 00R SORAM at 333MHz
- 40GB Hard Drive
- 12BMB ATI M11 Graphics and SXGA+ Display
- DVD/CORW Combo Drive
- Intel® Pro 2200 Wireless B/G
- Microsoft® Window® XP Home
- 3 Year Limited Warranty

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D1 - Digital Content Creation

- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 530 with HT Technology (3GHz, 1MB L2 Cache, B00MHz)
- Intel® 0925XCVLK Motherboard
- Convertable Desktop/Rackmount Professional Chassis
- 512MB Kingston 00R2 Memory at 533MHz
- 160GB Western Digital 7200 RPM Hard Drive
- ATI FIRE GL V3100 12BMB PCI Express Graphics
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional
- 3 Year Limited Warranty

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XPrema - A Series Server

- Dual Intel® XEON® Processors 2.8 GHz
- Intel® SE7520JR2 Server Motherboard
- RM414 CHASSIS with 16 SATA Hot-Swap Bays
- 1GB Kingston 00R2 ECC Registered Memory at 400MHz
- 400GB SATA Storage (Expandable to 4.2 Terabytes w/RAID 5)
- Microsoft® Windows® Server 2003 Standard
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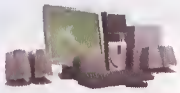
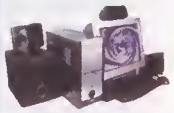
PERFORMANCE DESKTOPS $1,500 AND HIGHER

Model	Base Price*	Processor	RAM	Graphics	Hard Drive	Optical Drive(s)	Monitor	Editor's Take	Find Out More
GATEWAY									
710 Series	$1,849	3.2GHz Pentium 4	1GB	ATI Radeon 9600G	250GB	DVD±RW, DVD-ROM	17-inch LCD	This feature-filled PC can handle just about anything. The big LCD and memory-card reader are bonuses.	www.gateway.com 800-369-1409
710G Gaming PC	$1,999	3.2GHz Pentium 4	1GB	nVidia GeForce FX 5950G	250GB	DVD±RW	19-inch CRT	Extras like a sweet graphics card and large display yield a competent gaming system.	
710XL	$2,999	3.4GHz Pentium 4	1GB	nVidia GeForce FX 5950	250GB	DVD±RW, CD-RW	19-inch LCD	A lot of power in a potently configured package. The jumbo LCD makes it pricey, though.	
IBUYPOWER									
Night Dreamer FX	$1,679	2GHz Athlon 64 3000+	1GB	ATI Radeon X800 Pro	160GB	DVD±RW, DVD-ROM	19-inch CRT	A complete power setup for a very reasonable price. 64-bit processor is a nice bonus.	www.ibuypower.com 888-462-3899
Zillion Pro	$1,775	2.2GHz Athlon XP 3200+	1GB	nVidia GeForce FX 5950	120GB	DVD-ROM, CD-RW	19-inch CRT	iBuypower delivers amply configured desktops at very competitive prices—this being one.	
SONY ELECTRONICS									
VAIO PCV-V300G	$1,699	2.8GHz Pentium 4	512MB	Integrated	120GB	DVD±RW	15-inch LCD	Sleek all-in-one entertainment PC for tight spaces, but the integrated graphics is a downside.	www.sony.com/pc18 888-496-7669
VAIO VGC-RA810G	$2,199	3.4GHz Pentium 4	1GB	ATI Radeon X600 XT	250GB	DVD±RW, DVD-ROM	None	A Media Center PC that's definitely worth having in your home—plus, a slick Sony design.	
VELOCITY MICRO									
Gamer's Edge	$1,995	3.4GHz Pentium 4	512MB	nVidia GeForce 6800 GT	120GB	DVD-ROM, CD-RW	None	A step up from casual gaming. All the perks of a boutique PC at a reasonable price.	www.velocitymicro.com 800-303-7866
Vision FX A/V/D	$2,485	2.4GHz Athlon 64 FX-53	1GB	ATI Radeon 9600	120GB (two)	DVD-ROM, CD-RW	None	A powerfully configured machine for digital media enthusiasts, but comparatively costly.	
Raptor Extreme Edition	$3,990	3.4GHz Pentium 4 Extreme	1GB	nVidia GeForce 6800 Ultra	74GB (two), 250GB	DVD-ROM, CD-RW	None	An Extreme Edition processor and 1GB of RAM yields a PC capable of blazing speed—but it'll cost you.	
VOOOOOPC									
Hexx	$1,817	2GHz Athlon 64 3000+	512MB	nVidia GeForce 6800 GT	80GB	DVD-ROM	None	Solid specs, but VoodooPC's case choice is odd. Meant for on-the-go gaming but awkward to carry.	www.voodoopc.com 888-708-6636
Rage	$2,735	3.2GHz Pentium 4	512MB	nVidia GeForce PCX 6800 Ultra	80GB	DVD-ROM	None	Gaming rig looks cool, but we'd like to see a more impressive configuration for the money.	
Rage F:50	$3,697	2.2GHz Athlon XP 3200+	512MB	ATI Radeon X800 Pro	80GB	DVD-ROM	None	Great design and a powerful processor, but other components are unimpressive given high price.	
ZT GROUP									
Gamer Desktop ZT Pro X6471	$1,749	3.2GHz Pentium 4	512MB	ATI Radeon X800 Pro	160GB	DVD±RW, DVD-ROM	None	Above-average components make this a capable gaming PC and an affordable family machine.	www.ztgroup.com 866-984-7687
Media Center PC ZT Pro X6445	$1,999	3.2GHz Pentium 4	512MB	ATI Radeon X800 Pro	160GB	DVD±RW	None	A Media Center PC powerful enough to double as a gamer.	
Gamer Desktop ZT A5316	$2,449	2.4GHz Athlon 64 FX-53	512MB	ATI Radeon X800 Pro	160GB	DVD±RW, DVD-ROM	None	Plenty of gaming power for now and the future, although the price is a bit high.	

THE BEST RECENTLY REVIEWED PERFORMANCE DESKTOPS

HP Media Center m1050y Photosmart PC • $2,569 • Editors' Rating: 7.9
This Media Center PC offers a cool removable hard drive, but the fiery 3.6GHz Pentium 4 560 processor is more power than you need. Dial back the CPU a few notches. (See full review on p. 34.)

Dell Dimension XPS Gen-3 • $3,899 • Editors' Rating: 7.9
A machine that can do almost anything you want it to, but if you're looking for a showpiece-quality PC, there are better choices. (See full review on p. 34.)

Sony VAIO VGC-RA810G • $2,199 • Editors' Rating: 7.5
Sony figured out a way to keep an Intel Pentium 4 processor cool without using an army of fans, giving the nearly silent VGC-RA810G living-room appeal.

Dell Dimension XPS Gen-3

= Editors' Choice * Base price reflects vendor's default configuration. Most models are configurable.

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- Intel® Pentium® 4 or AMD® Athlon64® CPU
- 1GB Corsair® DDR400 RAM
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- Full Tower Case with Powerful 500Watt PSU
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- Creative Labs® Audigy2™ ZS
- Integrated Gigabit LAN & 56K V.92 Modem
- 7-in-1 Media Card Reader & 1.44MB Floppy
- Microsoft® Keyboard and Optical Mouse
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home, SP2
- Microsoft® Works Suite 2004
- T7700 7.1 Speaker System (add $129)
- 17" LCD (add $499) 15" LCD (add $359)

Intel P4 CPU @ 3.0 GHz **$1969** AMD Athlon 64 3500+ CPU **$2159**
Intel P4 CPU @ 3.2 GHz **$1999** AMD Athlon 64 3800+ CPU **$2479**
Intel P4 CPU @ 3.4 GHz (LGA 775) **$2099** AMD Athlon 64 FX-53 CPU **$2759**

the mini gamer

- AMD® Athlon® 64 CPU 64-Bit Power!
- 512MB Corsair® DDR400 RAM
- ATI® Radeon™ X800Pro with 256MB DDR RAM
- ALUMINUM Windowed Case with 400Watt PSU
- Blue LED case fans and rounded cables!
- 160GB HD 2x80GB 7200RPM 8MB SATA RAID
- 8x DVD±R/RW & CDRW Dual Layer DVDR
- Creative Labs® Audigy™ ES
- Gigabit LAN/56K V.92 Modem/Floppy
- Microsoft® Keyboard and Optical Mouse
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home, SP2
- Z-640 5.1 Speaker System (add $59)
- T7700 7.1 Speaker System (add $129)
- 17" LCD (add $499) 15" LCD (add $359)

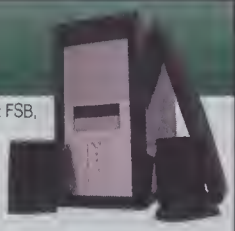
AMD Athlon 64 3000+ Processor.....**$1489**
AMD Athlon 64 3200+ Processor.....**$1539**
AMD Athlon 64 3400+ Processor.....**$1619**

the multimedia powerhouse

- Intel® Pentium® 4 800Mhz FSB, 1MB Cache, HT CPU
- 512MB DDR400 RAM
- NVIDIA® GeForce™ FX5700LE, 256MB DDR RAM, TV Out & DVI
- Mid Tower Case with 350Watt PSU
- 160GB 7200RPM SATA Hard Drive
- 8x DVD±R/RW DVD Writer
- Integrated Gigabit LAN & 56K V.92 Modem
- 7-in-1 Media Card Reader & 1.44MB Floppy
- Microsoft® Keyboard and Optical Mouse
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home, SP2
- Microsoft® Works Suite 2004
- Z-640 5.1 Speaker System (add $59)
- 17" LCD (add $499) 15" LCD (add $359)

Intel Pentium 4 Processor @ 3.0 GHz.....**$1139**
Intel Pentium 4 Processor @ 3.2 GHz.....**$1189**
Intel Pentium 4 CPU @ 3.4 GHz (LGA 775)...**$1269**

the small office PC



- Intel® Pentium® 4 800Mhz FSB, 1MB Cache, HT CPU
- 256MB DDR400 RAM
- ATI® Radeon™ 9200SE 128MB
- Mid Tower Case with 350Watt PSU
- 120GB 7200RPM Hard Drive
- 16x DVD & 52x24x52x CDRW Combo Drive
- Integrated 10/100 LAN & 56K V.92 Modem
- 1.44MB Floppy & Stereo Speakers
- Multimedia Keyboard and Mouse
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home, SP2
- Microsoft® Works 8.0 – Productivity Tools
- 17" LCD (add $499) 15" LCD (add $359)

Intel Pentium 4 Processor @ 2.8 GHz.....**$849**
Intel Pentium 4 Processor @ 3.0 GHz.....**$879**
Intel Pentium 4 Processor @ 3.2 GHz.....**$929**

the value PC

- AMD® Athlon™XP CPU
- 256MB DDR400 RAM
- NVIDIA® GeForce™ MX4000, 64MB RAM
- Black Mid Tower Case
- 80GB 7200RPM Hard Drive
- 16x DVD & 52x24x52x CDRW Combo Drive
- Integrated 10/100 LAN & 56K V.92 Modem
- 1.44MB Floppy & Stereo Speakers
- Multimedia Keyboard and Mouse
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home, SP2
- Microsoft® Works 8.0 – Productivity Tools
- 17" LCD (add $499) 15" LCD (add $359)

AMD Athlon XP 2500+.....**$659**
AMD Athlon XP 2800+.....**$709**
AMD Athlon XP 3000+.....**$739**

the ultra value PC

- AMD® Athlon™XP CPU
- 256MB RAM
- Integrated Video
- Black Mid Tower Case
- 80GB 7200RPM Hard Drive
- CD Optical Drive
- Integrated LAN & 56K V.92 Modem
- 1.44MB Floppy & Stereo Speakers
- Multimedia Keyboard and Mouse
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home, SP2
- 17" CRT Monitor add $165

AMD Athlon XP 2000+.....**$495**
AMD Athlon XP 2200+.....**$505**
AMD Athlon XP 2500+.....**$519**

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DESKTOP-REPLACEMENT NOTEBOOKS (MORE THAN 7 POUNDS)

NEED TO KNOW

PROCESSOR When choosing a CPU, configure your system with a robust processor such as Intel's desktop Pentium 4 with Hyper-Threading technology or AMD's 64-bit Athlon 64. Upgrade: Expect to pay about $50 for every 200MHz-increment upgrade of Pentium 4 processors.

MEMORY Don't be frugal with main system RAM—inadequate memory can drastically slow overall performance. Shoot for 512MB or even 1GB. Upgrade: Each additional 256MB of DDR SDRAM will cost roughly $70.

GRAPHICS If you play games, go for the latest graphics solutions with dedicated memory from ATI or nVidia. If you're not a gamer, save a little money by opting for 64MB of graphics RAM rather than 128MB.

HARD DRIVE A 40GB or 60GB drive may be plenty of space for casual users, but those who have large digital music collections, play lots of advanced games, or edit digital video should opt for 80GB or larger. Upgrade: Each additional 20GB of storage should cost about $65.

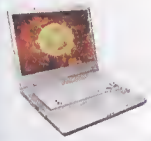
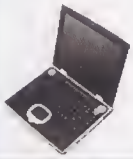
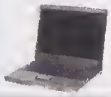
OPTICAL DRIVES Look for a multiformat (DVD±RW) DVD burner, which writes to both plus- and minus-format media. The drive's write speed is a secondary consideration, and slower drives can be had for a little less. Upgrade: Expect to pay about $140 to upgrade to a DVD±RW from a DVD/CD-RW combo drive.

CASE Don't fear heft and weight, since you probably won't be traveling with a desktop replacement. Powerful components do tend to run hot, so ensure that the case provides proper ventilation. Note that magnesium and other molded metal enclosures usually dissipate heat better than plastic ones.

WIRELESS CONNECTIVITY Integrated 802.11 wireless networking (Wi-Fi) is an essential feature. Most notebooks ship with a choice of 802.11b or 802.11b/g internal Wi-Fi radios. 802.11b technology, which has a rated data throughput of 11Mbps, is acceptable for ordinary use.

SCREEN Go for a wide-screen 17-inch or 15-inch TFT. Whether you'll be watching DVD movies in all their native letterbox glory or merely viewing multiple documents at once, more screen is always better.

—Brian Bennett, Notebooks Editor

Model	Base Price*	Processor	RAM	Graphics	Hard Drive	Optical Drive	Display	Wireless	Weight	Editor's Take	Find Out More
ABS COMPUTER TECHNOLOGIES											
zForce H2	$1,099	2.4GHz Celeron	256MB	Integrated	40GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15 inches	802.11b/g	7.3 lbs.	Inexpensive model lacks robust CPU, adequate RAM. Integrated graphics a minus.	www.abspc.com 800-876-8088
zForce F1	$1,429	3.06GHz Pentium 4	512MB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9000	60GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15 inches	None	7.7 lbs.	Outfitted with robust desktop CPU, big hard drive, but also aging graphics chip. No Wi-Fi.	
★ Mayhem G1	$1,699	2.8GHz Pentium 4	512MB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9600	80GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15.4 inches	802.11b/g	7.9 lbs.	Not the swiftest CPU money can buy, but overall a fair desktop-replacement deal.	
ACER AMERICA											
TravelMate 252ELC	$1,100	2.6GHz Pentium 4	256MB	Integrated	40GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15 inches	None	7.5 lbs.	Low price, but a small portion of RAM and integrated graphics.	www.acer.com 800-816-2237
Aspire 1661WLCi	$1,299	2.8GHz Pentium 4	512MB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9700	40GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15.4 inches	802.11b/g	7.9 lbs.	Solid 3D-graphics system, wide screen, and adequate RAM at a good price.	
CYBERPOWER											
U2-1000	$889	2.4GHz Celeron	512MB	Integrated	40GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15 inches	None	7.2 lbs.	A rock-bottom price, but slow CPU, integrated graphics won't deliver much power.	www.cyberpowerpc.com 800-707-0393
Xplorer X64-8000	$1,409	1.8GHz Mobile Athlon 64 3000+	256MB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9600	20GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15 inches	None	7.9 lbs.	A 64-bit processor for a low price, but tiny hard drive, limited RAM are letdowns.	
Xplorer X64-9000	$1,555	1.8GHz Mobile Athlon 64 3000+	512MB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9600	60GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15 inches	None	7.9 lbs.	With a fast 64-bit CPU and acceptable 3D graphics, a bargain at its midrange price.	
DELL											
Inspiron 1150	$854	2.6GHz Celeron	256MB	Integrated	40GB	DVD-ROM	14.1 inches	None	7.5 lbs.	Entry-level machine stocked with essential components for basic computing.	www.dell.com 800-624-6139
Inspiron 9100	$1,317	2.8GHz Pentium 4	256MB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9700	60GB	DVD-ROM	15.4 inches	None	8.9 lbs.	Respectable 3D graphics and roomy hard drive for low price. Consider upping RAM.	
EMACHINES											
M2352	$1,349	1.8GHz Mobile Athlon 64 3000+	512MB	Integrated	60GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15.4 inches	802.11b/g	7.5 lbs.	A well-configured laptop light on your bank account but lacking serious power.	www.emachines.com 801-401-1419

★ = Editors' Choice * Base price reflects vendor's default configuration. Most models are configurable.

Model	Base Price*	Processor	RAM	Graphics	Hard Drive	Optical Drive	Display	Wireless	Weight	Editor's Take	Find Out More
M6810	$1,499	2GHz Mobile Athlon 64 3200+	512MB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9600	80GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15.4 inches	802.11b/g	7.5 lbs.	Nice mix of solidly performing parts adds up to a decently powerful bargain laptop.	www.emachines.com 801-401-1419
M6412	$1,699	2.2GHz Athlon 64 3400+	512MB	Integrated	80GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15.4 inches	802.11b/g	7.5 lbs.	64-bit CPU, big hard drive, and wide screen have allure, but slow graphics for gaming.	
FUJITSU COMPUTER SYSTEMS											
LifeBook N5000	$1,899	3GHz Pentium 4	512MB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9600	40GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	16.1 inches	802.11b/g	10.1 lbs.	Good CPU, huge display for the price, though second-tier 3D-graphics chip lags.	www.fujitsu.com 800-385-4878
GATEWAY											
M450 Series	$1,499	2.8GHz Pentium 4	256MB	Integrated	40GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15 inches	802.11b	7.5 lbs.	Parts match the midrange price; a laptop for basic business tasks.	www.gateway.com 800-369-1409
M675 Series	$1,699	2.8GHz Pentium 4	256MB	Integrated	40GB	CD-ROM	17.1 inches	802.11b/g	8.8 lbs.	Even with its big, wide screen, expensive considering the otherwise basic components.	
HEWLETT-PACKARD											
Pavilion ZV5000z Series	$849	2GHz Athlon XP-M 3000+	256MB	nVidia GeForce4 420 Go	30GB	DVD-ROM	15 inches	None	7.8 lbs.	If aging components and power only for basic tasks suffice, it's a real bargain.	www.hp.com 888-999-4747
Pavilion ZX5000 Series	$1,049	2.8GHz Pentium 4	256MB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9200	40GB	DVD-ROM	15 inches	None	8.1 lbs.	Solid parts power this budget-minded desktop replacement.	
Pavilion ZD7000 Series	$1,199	2.8GHz Pentium 4	256MB	nVidia GeForce FX Go5200	40GB	DVD-ROM	15.4 inches	None	9.3 lbs.	Nice low price for a wide-screen laptop with a decent 3D-graphics chip.	
IBM											
ThinkPad G Series	$799	2.4GHz Celeron	128MB	Integrated	20GB	CD-ROM	14 inches	None	7.6 lbs.	A rock-bottom price, but barely enough horsepower to run Windows XP with pep.	www.ibm.com 888-746-7426
IBUYPOWER											
Battalion 101 SC Series	$2,249	2.8GHz Pentium 4	1GB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9700	60GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	17 inches	802.11b/g	10.5 lbs.	A great mix of powerful parts and features, plus big display, but pricey with average CPU.	www.ibuypower.com 888-462-3899
SONY ELECTRONICS											
VAIO A Series	$1,249	1.4GHz Celeron M	256MB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9200	40GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15 inches	802.11b/g	7.1 lbs.	Inexpensive and built with low-end parts; a configuration up to modest tasks.	www.sony.com/pc18 888-496-7669
VAIO GRT Series	$1,299	2GHz Celeron	256MB	nVidia GeForce FX Go5600	40GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15 inches	802.11b/g	8.6 lbs.	Solid, if not high-end, parts for a low price. More RAM would make a sweeter deal.	
VAIO K Series	$1,499	2.8GHz Pentium 4	512MB	Integrated	60GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15.4 inches	802.11b/g	8 lbs.	A good range of solid parts at a fair price, though better graphics would be nice.	
SYSTEMAX											
Pursuit 2110	$899	2.6GHz Celeron	128MB	Integrated	20GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15 inches	None	7.7 lbs.	Strictly entry-level model will immediately leave you asking for more.	www.systemaxpc.com 888-845-6225
Pursuit 2130	$999	2.6GHz Pentium 4	256MB	Integrated	20GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	14 inches	None	7.7 lbs.	Decent CPU is about all it has going for it. Shoot for more hard drive space, RAM.	
Pursuit 2210	$1,099	2.2GHz Pentium 4	256MB	SIS 650GM	40GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	14 inches	None	7.7 lbs.	Inexpensive, yet comes with adequate hard drive space and solid, if slow, CPU.	
TOSHIBA AMERICA											
Satellite A60	$799	2.5GHz Celeron	256MB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9700	30GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15 inches	802.11b/g	7.7 lbs.	Low-cost laptop is a great value; surprising range of solid entry-level components.	www.toshiba.com 800-3160920
Satellite A75	$1,349	2.8GHz Pentium 4	512MB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9000	60GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15.4 inches	802.11b/g	8 lbs.	Well-stocked wide-screen is a great value even with its aging graphics chip.	
Qosmio	$2,699	1.7GHz Pentium 4	512MB	nVidia GeForce FX Go5200	80GB	DVD±RW	15 inches	802.11b/g	8.2 lbs.	With an amazingly bright display, pricey unit should attract mobile graphics pros.	
VELOCITY MICRO											
NoteMagix S56	$2,295	2.6GHz Pentium 4	256MB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9700	40GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15.1 inches	802.11b/g	8.8 lbs.	Expensive for its solid, but not extraordinary, components.	www.velocitymicro.com 800-303-7866
ZT GROUP											
Model 1036	$1,099	2.8GHz Pentium 4	256MB	Integrated	40GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15 inches	802.11b	7.3 lbs.	Affordable notebook packs respectably swift desktop CPU for low price.	www.ztgroup.com 866-984-7687

THIN-AND-LIGHT NOTEBOOKS (4 TO 7 POUNDS)

NEED TO KNOW

PROCESSOR Look for a model powered by Intel's Pentium M processor, which provides good battery life, strong performance, and cool running temperatures. Save a little by opting for lower clock speeds, such as 1.6GHz. Upgrade: Expect to pay about $100 for every 100MHz-increment upgrade of Pentium M processors.

MEMORY Adequate RAM is crucial for fast performance, especially when running multiple apps. Configure your notebook with at least 512MB of high-speed DDR SDRAM. Upgrade: Each additional 256MB of DDR memory will cost roughly $70.

GRAPHICS When choosing a thin-and-light, portability should be a priority. Though many Pentium M-based laptops have robust 3D-graphics chips, save some cash by opting for less-expensive integrated graphics—unless you're a gamer, that is.

HARD DRIVE 60GB is a good capacity for most users. If you require speed, select a 5,400rpm drive. Upgrade: Each additional 20GB of storage will cost about $65.

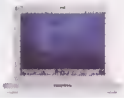
OPTICAL DRIVES Most thin-and-light laptops ship standard with versatile DVD/CD-RW combo drives, which should satisfy the needs of most users. If burning DVDs on the road is a must, choose a multiformat DVD±RW drive. Upgrade: Expect to pay about $140 to upgrade to DVD±RW from a DVD/CD-RW combo drive.

CASE A laptop chassis more than 1.5 inches thick or heavier than 7 pounds (without AC adapter) exceeds the bounds of the thin-and-light class.

WIRELESS CONNECTIVITY Integrated 802.11 wireless networking (Wi-Fi) is an essential feature. Most notebooks ship with a choice of 802.11b or 802.11b/g internal Wi-Fi radios. 802.11b technology, which has a rated data throughput of 11Mbps, is fine for ordinary use.

SCREEN Panoramic wide-screen displays, previously available only in larger desktop-replacement notebooks, are now available in lighter systems. To watch DVD movies in letterbox style or have room to view multiple documents at once, go with a high-resolution 15.4-inch wide-format TFT. Upgrade: A UXGA screen will cost about $100 more than an XGA display.

—Brian Bennett, Notebooks Editor

Model	Base Price*	Processor	RAM	Graphics	Hard Drive	Optical Drive	Display	Wireless	Weight	Editor's Take	Find Out More
ABS COMPUTER TECHNOLOGIES											
zForce F2	$1,499	1.6GHz Pentium M	512MB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9600	60GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15 inches	802.11b/g	6.3 lbs.	Impressive mix of powerful mobile parts for a nice price.	www.abspc.com 800-876-8088
Mayhem G2	$1,899	1.6GHz Pentium M	1GB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9700	60GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15.4 inches	802.11b/g	6.4 lbs.	Thin-and-light offers generous amount of RAM, roomy hard drive, and a wide screen.	
ACER AMERICA											
Ferrari 3200	$1,999	1.6GHz Athlon 64 3200	512MB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9700	80GB	DVD±RW	15 inches	802.11b/g	6.6 lbs.	A flame-red screamer packed with premium parts designed for speed.	www.acer.com 800-816-2237
TravelMate 8000	$1,999	1.6GHz Pentium M	512MB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9700	60GB	DVD±RW	15 inches	802.11b/g	6.4 lbs.	Excellent features plus long battery life equals a good deal.	
APPLE COMPUTER											
iBook G4	$1,099	1GHz PowerPC G4	256MB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9200	30GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	12 inches	None	4.9 lbs.	A breeze to carry; modestly configured, but should serve undemanding users.	www.apple.com 800-692-7753 
PowerBook G4	$1,599	1.33GHz PowerPC G4	256MB	nVidia GeForce FX Go5200	60GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	12 inches	802.11b/g	4.6 lbs.	Packs mediocre mix of parts into highly portable package; needs more RAM.	
CYBERPOWER											
Gamer Xplorer X5-6000	$1,789	3.4GHz Pentium 4	1GB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9700	80GB	DVD-RW	15.4 inches	802.11g	6.9 lbs.	Well-priced midrange laptop, considering parts. Flash-card reader is a nice bonus.	www.cyberpowerpc.com 800-707-0393
DELL											
Inspiron 1000	$699	2.2GHz Celeron	256MB	Integrated	30GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	14.1 inches	None	6.4 lbs.	Budget-price, moderately powerful machine for basic computing tasks.	www.dell.com 800-624-6139
Latitude D600	$1,149	1.8GHz Pentium M	128MB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9000	20GB	None	14.1 inches	802.11b	4.7 lbs.	Low-cost and has good CPU, though RAM and tiny hard drive are constraining.	
FUJITSU COMPUTER SYSTEMS											
LifeBook E4010D	$1,199	1.4GHz Pentium M	256MB	Integrated	30GB	CD-ROM	14.1 inches	None	6.4 lbs.	Low-price thin-and-light with respectable CPU but small storage, RAM, screen.	www.fujitsu.com 800-385-4878
LifeBook T3010	$1,799	1.4GHz Pentium M	256MB	Integrated	40GB	None	12.1 inches	802.11b/g	4.2 lbs.	A high price for portability considering tablet's unexciting component list.	
GATEWAY											
M305 Series	$899	2.5GHz Celeron	256MB	Integrated	30GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15 inches	None	6.2 lbs.	Adequately built budget unit for basic computing tasks; won't break speed records.	www.gateway.com 800-369-1409

= Editors' Choice * Base price reflects vendor's default configuration. Most models are configurable.

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TECHMARKET THIN-AND-LIGHT NOTEBOOKS (4 TO 7 POUNDS)

Model	Base Price*	Processor	RAM	Graphics	Hard Drive	Optical Drive	Display	Wireless	Weight	Editor's Take	Find Out More
450 Series	$1,599	1.7GHz Pentium M	256MB	Integrated	30GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15 inches	802.11b	5.8 lbs.	Average thin-and-light built with robust CPU, but hobbled by RAM and integrated graphics.	www.gateway.com 800-369-1409
HEWLETT-PACKARD											
Compaq Presario X1000 Series	$999	1.3GHz Celeron M	256MB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9200	30GB	DVD-ROM	15.4 inches	None	6.5 lbs.	A cost-cutting configuration for business users; lacks powerful CPU, 3D graphics.	www.hp.com 888-999-4747
Pavilion ZT3000 Series	$999	1.3GHz Celeron M	256MB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9200	40GB	DVD-ROM	15.4 inches	None	6.5 lbs.	Thin-and-light's configuration is a pale, if budget-price, shadow of pricier siblings.	
IBM											
✓ ThinkPad R Series	$1,199	2.2GHz Celeron	256MB	Integrated	30GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	14.1 inches	None	6 lbs.	Inexpensive but built with sluggish components; should satisfy basic business users.	www.ibm.com 888-746-7426
✓ ThinkPad T Series	$1,629	1.4GHz Pentium M	256MB	ATI Mobility Radeon 7500	40GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	14.1 inches	802.11b	4.5 lbs.	A trim machine with a price to match its middle-of-the-road, yet capable, parts.	
IBUYPOWER											
Battalion-101 S-Turbo	$1,439	2.8GHz Pentium 4	512MB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9700	60GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15.4 inches	802.11b/g	6.4 lbs.	Thin-and-light hosts fast mobile parts, wide screen, and decent 3D graphics.	www.ibuypower.com 888-462-3899
Battalion-101 E-Turbo	$1,659	1.6GHz Pentium M	1GB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9700	80GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15 inches	802.11b/g	6.1 lbs.	Packs speedy, if not cutting-edge, parts; priced well for a light desktop replacement.	
SONY ELECTRONICS											
VAIO S Series	$1,499	1.4GHz Celeron M	256MB	Integrated	40GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	13.3 inches	None	4.3 lbs.	Slim and trim; budget CPU, modest RAM may leave you craving an upgrade.	www.sony.com/pc18 888-496-7669
VAIO V505	$1,499	1.2GHz Pentium M	256MB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9200	40GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	12.1 inches	None	4.4 lbs.	Elegantly styled thin-and-light decked out in configuration that's adequate, if not blazing.	
TOSHIBA AMERICA											
Satellite M30	$1,259	1.5GHz Pentium M	256MB	nVidia GeForce FX Go5200	60GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15 inches	B02.11b/g	6.2 lbs.	Generous power considering low price, but a RAM upgrade is in order.	www.toshiba.com 800-316-0920
Tecra M2	$1,349	1.4GHz Pentium M	256MB	nVidia GeForce FX Go5200	40GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	14.1 inches	802.11b/g	5 lbs.	Powerful enough for light business tasks, plus pleasing no-frills price.	
✓ Portégé M200 Series	$2,199	1.5GHz Pentium M	512MB	Integrated	40GB	None	12.1 inches	802.11b	4.4 lbs.	Nicely designed convertible; pricey but remains a good tablet buy.	
VELOCITY MICRO											
NoteMagix 851	$1,215	1.5GHz Pentium M	256MB	Integrated	40GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15 inches	802.11b/g	6 lbs.	Competitively priced, but not built for speed and sorely lacking adequate RAM.	www.velocitymicro.com 800-303-7866
NoteMagix 850 Ultra	$1,725	1.5GHz Pentium M	256MB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9700	40GB	CD-ROM	15.1 inches	802.11b/g	6 lbs.	Thin-and-light delivers decent components but is pricey, short on RAM.	
ZT GROUP											
Model 1038	$1,199	1.5GHz Pentium M	256MB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9100	40GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15 inches	802.11b/g	6.8 lbs.	Inexpensive and configured to match its unassuming price.	www.ztgroup.com 866-984-7687
Model 1039	$1,699	1.6GHz Pentium M	256MB	ATI Mobility Radeon 9600	60GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	15.4 inches	802.11b/g	5.7 lbs.	Costly, with a list of specs that are solid but not robust.	

THE BEST RECENTLY REVIEWED THIN-AND-LIGHT NOTEBOOKS

✓ **HP Compaq Business Notebook NC6000 • $2,199 • Editors' Rating: 8.5**
The NC6000 isn't all business—this slim system has more than enough performance and battery life to satisfy mobile gamers looking to kill time between flights and meetings.

Dell Inspiron 700m • $1,866 • Editors' Rating: 8.1
Small and thin, this Inspiron was made to travel. It packs all the essentials, plus a DVD burner and a wide-screen display. (See review on p. 45.)

IBM ThinkPad R51 • $1,499 • Editors' Rating: 7.4
This well-priced ThinkPad, with its fast Pentium M processor and ATI Mobility Radeon graphics chip, delivers plenty of horsepower for the average home or corporate user.

Dell Inspiron 700m

✓ = Editors' Choice * Base price reflects vendor's default configuration. Most models are configurable.

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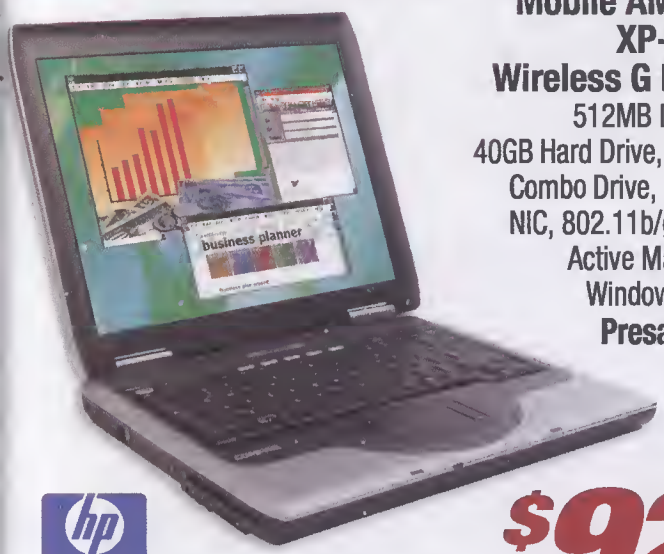

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512MB DDR SDRAM, 40GB Hard Drive, DVD/CD-RW Combo Drive, 56K Modem, NIC, 802.11b/g, 15.0" XGA Active Matrix Display, Windows® XP Home
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3.0GHz Intel® Pentium® 4 Wireless Notebook
512MB DDR SDRAM, 40GB Hard Drive, DVD/CD-RW Drive, 802.11b Wireless, 15" Active Matrix Display, Windows® XP Home
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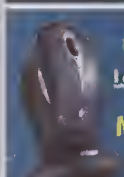

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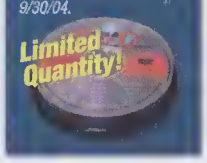

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ULTRAPORTABLE NOTEBOOKS (LESS THAN 4 POUNDS)

NEED TO KNOW

PROCESSOR Intel's Ultra Low Voltage (ULV) Pentium M processors deliver the longest battery life. Save money by choosing a CPU speed a few notches below the fastest.

MEMORY Because an ultraportable's system RAM often does double duty as its graphics memory, get at least 512MB. Upgrade: Each additional 256MB of DDR memory will cost roughly $70.

GRAPHICS Ultraportables typically rely on integrated graphics chips, which share memory with main system RAM. You may not have a choice, but aim for a graphics solution that grabs at least 64MB of system RAM.

HARD DRIVE Since you probably won't be storing large game files or editing video on an ultraportable, a 40GB or 60GB drive should be adequate. Upgrade: Each additional 20GB of storage will cost about $65.

OPTICAL DRIVES Ultraportables often forgo optical drives to minimize weight and size. Some models do include internal DVD/CD-RW drives, however, and a few allow you to swap the optical drive for an extra battery.

CASE Look for a model with a case that's durable, preferably one molded in metal alloy. Pay close attention to the size and quality of the keyboard.

WIRELESS CONNECTIVITY Most notebooks ship with a choice of 802.11b or 802.11b/g internal Wi-Fi radios. 802.11b technology, which has a rated data throughput of 11Mbps, is fine for ordinary use.

SCREEN Ultraportables' screen sizes typically range from 10.6 to 12.1 inches; opt for a model with the largest possible screen. Also, note that some ultraportables are available with wide-format screens. *—Brian Bennett, Notebooks Editor*

Model	Base Price*	Processor	RAM	Graphics	Hard Drive	Optical Drive	Display	Wireless	Weight	Editor's Take	Find Out More
DELL											
Latitude D400	$1,439	1.7GHz Pentium M	128MB	Integrated	20GB	None	12.1 inches	802.11b	3.7 lbs.	Modest features fit for firms looking to upgrade their ultralight fleet inexpensively.	www.dell.com 800-624-6139
Latitude X300	$1,439	1.2GHz Pentium M	128MB	Integrated	20GB	None	12.1 inches	802.11b	2.9 lbs.	Superlightweight, it exudes biz appeal and elegance without breaking the bank.	
FUJITSU COMPUTER SYSTEMS											
Lifebook P1120	$1,199	800MHz Crusoe TM5800	256MB	ATI Rage Mobility M	30GB	None	8.9 inches	802.11b	2.2 lbs.	Affordable featherweight isn't very powerful and lacks optical drive, but has Wi-Fi.	www.fujitsu.com 800-385-4878
Lifebook S2020	$1,199	1.6GHz Athlon XP-M 2100+	256MB	Integrated	30GB	None	13.3 inches	None	3.9 lbs.	Small, lightweight size makes carrying easy; big display, and the price is low.	
Lifebook B3020	$1,699	ULV 1.1GHz Pentium M	256MB	Integrated	40GB	None	10.4 inches	802.11b/g	3.3 lbs.	Touch-screen display offers POA-like computing in an ultralightweight package.	
IBM											
ThinkPad X Series	$1,499	ULV 1GHz Pentium M	256MB	Integrated	20GB	None	12.1 inches	802.11b	2.7 lbs.	Well-configured yet highly portable; delivers adequate components for the price.	www.ibm.com 888-746-7426
SONY ELECTRONICS											
VAIO TR Series	$2,199	ULV 1.1GHz Pentium M	512MB	Integrated	40GB	DVD/CD-RW combo	10.6 inches	802.11b/g	3.1 lbs.	Great mix of premium parts for a decent price, squeezed into attractive, compact case.	www.sony.com/pc18 888-496-7669
VAIO X505 (see below)	$2,999	ULV 1.1GHz Pentium M	512MB	Integrated	20GB	None	10.4 inches	None	1.9 lbs.	Razor-thin, advanced executive PC is expensive considering it lacks CD drive.	
TOSHIBA AMERICA											
Portégé R100	$1,999	ULV 1.1GHz Pentium M	512MB	Trident XPm32 LP	40GB	None	12.1 inches	802.11b	2.4 lbs.	High-flying corporate traveler lacks internal CD drive; costly considering components.	www.toshiba.com 800-316-0920

THE BEST RECENTLY REVIEWED ULTRAPORTABLES

IBM ThinkPad X40 • $1,499 • Editors' Rating: 8.5
At just 2.7 pounds, this full-featured, highly capable powerhouse combines true portability with excellent expansion and connectivity options.

Panasonic ToughBook CF-W2 • $2,284 • Editors' Rating: 8.1
This long-lasting, rugged laptop compresses plenty of full-size features into an ultraportable package. Plus, it's got a nifty hidden DVD/CD-RW combo drive under the wrist rest.

Sony VAIO X505 • $2,999 • Editors' Rating: 7.5
The slim, elegant X505 is eminently portable and has features and performance to satisfy, but, like a fine work of art, it's a little costly for the average person.

Sony VAIO X505

= Editors' Choice * Base price reflects vendor's default configuration. Most models are configurable.

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LOW-COST PDAs ($299 AND LESS)

NEED TO KNOW

OPERATING SYSTEM The two common operating systems for handhelds are Palm and Microsoft Windows Mobile 2003. The Palm OS is favored by many for its ease of use, while those who seek tight compatibility with Windows opt for the Microsoft OS.

PROCESSOR Windows Mobile 2003 PDAs require faster processors to run. Casual Windows Mobile users should do fine with a 400MHz CPU, while power users should opt for a 624MHz processor. Palm handhelds' CPUs range from 126MHz to 400MHz. If in doubt, go for a faster engine; it won't cost a lot more.

MEMORY Though you can most likely get by on 32MB of RAM, 64MB will allow you to better handle an array of applications without slowing down.

SIZE AND ERGONOMICS We highly recommend you check the size and feel of a few handhelds at a retail store before committing to a specific model. Try models with a thumb keyboard and stylus input to determine which you prefer.

BATTERY Look for a PDA that offers a user-removable main battery as well as a separate backup battery. The former feature will let you swap in an optional second cell in a pinch; with the latter, you won't risk losing your important data when the juice finally runs dry.

CONNECTIVITY Integrated 802.11b Wi-Fi wireless networking is becoming increasingly common. With Web browsers, e-mail clients, and even QWERTY keyboards now coming standard on many PDAs, you may find Wi-Fi worth the added expense.

CAMERA Digital cameras built into in PDAs deliver disappointing images that don't match the quality of even low-end stand-alone cameras. If impromptu snapshots aren't a must, forgo PDAs with this feature.

—Brian Bennett, Mobile Products Editor

Model	Price	Processor	RAM	Operating System	Weight	Display Resolution	Wireless	Editor's Take	Find Out More
CASIO									
E-125	$299	150MHz VR4122	32MB	Windows for Pocket PC	8.8 oz.	240x320	None	Not the best Pocket PC for the price, considering slow CPU and meager amount of RAM.	www.casio.com 800-836-8580
DELL									
Axim X30	$199	312MHz Intel XScale	32MB	Windows Mobile 2003 SE	4.7 oz.	240x320	None	A great value for its components; packed with a speedy CPU and running Microsoft's latest OS.	www.dell.com 800-624-6139
Axim X30	$279	312MHz Intel XScale	64MB	Windows Mobile 2003 SE	4.9 oz.	240x320	802.11b, Bluetooth	Same specs as the base model X30, but adds wireless connectivity.	
HEWLETT-PACKARD									
iPaq Pocket PC h1945	$219.99	266MHz Samsung	64MB	Windows Mobile 2003 Professional	4.2 oz.	240x320	Bluetooth	Svelte and lightweight, but you still get a large helping of power and RAM—plus Bluetooth.	www.hp.com 800-888-0262
PALMONE									
Zire 21	$99	126MHz TI OMAP 311 ARM	8MB	Palm OS 5.2.1	3.8 oz.	160x160	None	The original Zire model is the most affordable PDA around—but you don't get much for the money.	www.palmone.com 800-881-7256
Zire 31	$149	200MHz Intel ARM-based	16MB	Palm OS 5.2.8	4.1 oz.	160x160	None	Showing its age, this under-powered Palm is inexpensive but has an unimpressive feature set.	
Tungsten E	$199	126MHz TI OMAP 311 ARM	32MB	Palm OS 5.2.1	4.6 oz.	320x320	None	Sporting a trim, sophisticated design, this PDA delivers a solid lineup of features and value.	
Zire 72	$299	312MHz Intel PXA270	32MB	Palm OS 5.2.8	4.8 oz.	320x320	Bluetooth	An upgrade to the Zire 31, this pricey cousin is capable with multimedia applications.	
SONY ELECTRONICS									
PEG-TJ27	$199	200MHz i.MXL	32MB	Palm OS 5.2	5.1 oz.	320x320	None	A good deal for a Palm OS POA, with a zippy processor and high-resolution screen.	www.sony.com/pc18 888-496-7669
PEG-TJ37	$299	200MHz i.MXL	32MB	Palm OS 5.2	5.1 oz.	320x320	802.11b	With all the specs of its little brother the PEG-TJ27, this POA has integrated Wi-Fi—at a price.	
TAPWAVE									
Zodiac1	$299	200MHz Motorola	32MB	Palm OS 5.2	6.3 oz	480x320	Bluetooth	This fully-featured Palm POA also has a fun side, doubling as a robust portable gaming device.	www.tapwave.com 888-433-3232
TOSHIBA AMERICA									
Pocket PC e400w	$299	300MHz Intel PXA261	32MB	Windows Mobile 2003	4.6 oz.	240x320	None	A standard Pocket PC with ordinary components; costs about $100 more than it should.	www.toshiba.com 800-316-0920

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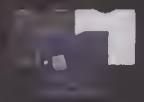

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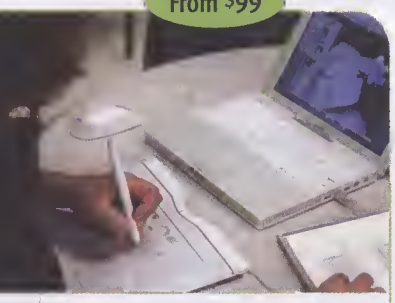

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DIGITAL CAMERAS (3.2-MEGAPIXEL AND UNDER)

NEED TO KNOW

RESOLUTION The quality of digital photos is primarily measured in the number of pixels a camera's image sensor can capture. Consider a 2-megapixel camera if you're mostly planning to send pictures via e-mail and don't need prints larger than 5x7 inches. Otherwise, a 3.2-megapixel camera will let you output photo-quality prints of up to 8x10 inches.

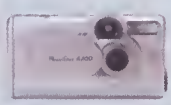
LENS The ability of a digital camera's lens to magnify far-away action (that is, its optical zoom) is measured in "x." Look for a model with at least a 3x optical zoom; pay no attention to digital-zoom specs. Look for a lens that retracts when you turn the camera off. A glass lens is preferable to a plastic one, though vendors often don't specify what you get. A fixed-focus lens offers no ability to zoom and should generally be avoided.

STORAGE MEDIUM Most digicams use wafer-thin flash-memory cards like CompactFlash, SD/MultiMediaCard, Olympus' xD-Picture Card, or Sony's Memory Stick. Cameras usually come with a small-capacity card, so you'll want to invest in an additional, roomier card with at least 128MB or 256MB to store more photos. If you already have another flash-based device, consider cameras that use the same storage format so you can share cards.

BATTERY Some cameras offer only a proprietary rechargeable battery, usually either lithium ion or nickel-metal-hydride, that can't be swapped out if it runs out of power. Choose a model that can also handle disposable batteries you can carry with you to use in a pinch.

VIDEO RECORDING Many digicams can record short video clips. (A number also record sound with the video.) Some models limit recording to 30 seconds or less, while others will record as long as your storage will allow. Models that can record at 30 frames per second can produce decent VGA-quality (640x480-pixel) video shorts.

—Sean Portnoy, Hardware Editor

Model	Price	Resolution (Megapixels)	Optical Zoom	Included Memory	Storage Type	Weight	Editor's Take	Find Out More
CANON U.S.A.								
PowerShot A60	$149	2	3x	16MB	CompactFlash	7.6 oz.	Compensates for lack of megapixels with surprisingly broad feature set.	usa.canon.com 800-652-2666
PowerShot A300	$149	3.2	None	16MB	CompactFlash	6.2 oz.	Excellent image quality, despite lack of optical zoom.	
PowerShot A75	$245	3.2	3x	32MB	CompactFlash	7.6 oz.	Excellent choice if you value versatility and image quality over compact size.	
PowerShot SD110	$249	3.2	2x	16MB	CompactFlash	5.8 oz.	Svelte cam has only 2x optical zoom; good image quality.	
PowerShot S1 IS	$359	3.2	10x	32MB	CompactFlash	13.1 oz.	A bulky camera with a huge zoom lens for enthusiasts who handhold distance shots.	
EASTMAN KODAK								
EasyShare CX6200	$99.95	2.1	None	8MB (internal)	SD/MMC	5.3 oz.	Great price, lacks optical zoom; video capture is a plus.	www.kodak.com 800-235-6325
EasyShare CX7300	$129.95	3.2	None	16MB (internal)	SD/MMC	5.2 oz.	Doubles internal memory of the CX6200 for a few more dollars.	
EasyShare CX6230	$149.95	2	3x	16MB (internal)	SD/MMC	6.2 oz.	Slighty heavier than the CX7300 but adds zoom.	
EasyShare DX6340	$249.95	3.1	4x	16MB (internal)	SD/MMC	7.8 oz.	Novices get ease of use and room to grow; images come up short.	
FUJI PHOTO FILM U.S.A.								
FinePix A330	$279	3.2	3x	16MB	xD-Picture Card	5.1 oz.	Featherweight shooter has PictBridge and powers on when lens cover is opened.	www.fujifilm.com 800-659-3854
FinePix S3000	$349	3.2	6x	16MB	xD-Picture Card	10 oz.	6x optical zoom and easy close-ups don't offset mediocre performance.	
HEWLETT-PACKARD								
Photosmart 435	$129.99	3.1	None	16MB (internal)	SD/MMC	4.7 oz.	Suffers from bare-bones features, but produces average images.	www.hp.com 800-282-6672
Photosmart 635	$149.99	2.1	3x	16MB (internal)	SD/MMC	6.5 oz.	A simple, competent shooter; performance isn't stellar.	
Photosmart 735	$179.99	3.2	3x	16MB (internal)	SD/MMC	8.3 oz.	Solidly built, but yields images with overly vivid colors.	
KONICA MINOLTA PHOTO IMAGING U.S.A.								
DiMage X20	$179	2	3x	8MB (internal)	SD	6.1 oz.	Low end of the slim DiMage X line; a mediocre performer.	www.konica.com 800-285-6422
DiMage Xg	$249	3.2	3x	16MB	SD	4.2 oz.	Snapshooters seeking style, portability, and ease of use can't go wrong with this one.	
DiMage X31	$249.99	3.2	3x	16MB	SD/MMC	4.1 oz.	Thinner than the DiMage Xg, it also features faster startup times.	

Model	Price	Resolution (Megapixels)	Optical Zoom	Included Memory	Storage Type	Weight	Editor's Take	Find Out More
OiMage Z10	$399.99	3.2	8x	16MB	SD/MMC	10.6 oz.	Promises fast startup and autofocus performance to go with its large zoom lens.	www.konica.com 800-285-6422
NIKON								
Coolpix 2200	$149	2	3x	14.5MB (internal)	SD/MMC	4.9 oz.	Inexpensive, compact, and includes optical zoom.	www.nikonusa.com 800-645-6687
Coolpix 3200	$249	3.2	3x	14.5MB (internal)	SD/MMC	4.9 oz.	Along with an extra megapixel, the 3200 adds a microphone to the 2200's feature set.	
Coolpix 3700	$399	3.2	3x	14.5MB (internal)	SD/MMC	4.6 oz.	Good photo quality for a pocket camera, but no image controls for advanced users.	
OLYMPUS AMERICA								
D-390 Zoom	$129	2	None	16MB	xD-Picture Card	5.8 oz.	Basic shooter has fixed lens, records QuickTime movie clips.	www.olympusamerica.com 888-553-4448
D-395 Zoom	$149	3.2	None	16MB	xD-Picture Card	5.8 oz.	Adds a megapixel to the D-390, but still no zoom lens.	
D-540 Zoom	$199	3.2	3x	16MB	xD-Picture Card	5.3 oz.	Features PictBridge; plus, an image processor reduces lag time.	
D-575 Zoom	$299.95	3.2	3x	16MB	xD-Picture Card	5.8 oz.	Improves D-540's feature set with black-and-white, sepia modes, plus built-in mic.	
C-740 Ultra Zoom	$349	3.2	10x	16MB	xD-Picture Card	10.4 oz.	Wide zoom range and solid image quality, but otherwise an average camera.	
PANASONIC								
Lumix DMC-LC50	$249	3.2	3x	16MB	SD	8 oz.	Includes a Leica lens and Mega Burst feature for capturing action shots.	www.panasonic.com 800-662-3537
Lumix DMC-LC33	$289.99	3.2	3x	16MB	SD	6 oz.	Good photo quality at a nice price, but poky performance.	
Lumix DMC-F7	$339	2	2x	8MB	SD	5.3 oz.	Stylish, compact, and capable, but lacks advanced feature set.	
Lumix DMC-FZ3	$399	3.1	12x	16MB	SD	8.3 oz.	Market-leading 12x stabilized zoom and fast burst mode, but no optical viewfinder.	
PENTAX								
Optio30	$200	3.2	3x	16MB (internal)	SD	4.6 oz.	Impressive feature set for a lightweight digicam.	www.pentaxusa.com 800-877-0155
Optio33L	$275	3.2	3x	16MB	CompactFlash	6.2 oz.	Interesting mix of features in a compact package, but image quality is less than stellar.	
OptioS	$369.99	3.2	3x	11MB (internal)	SD/MMC	3.5 oz.	Smaller and slimmer than the Optio30, but has 5MB less internal memory.	
SONY ELECTRONICS								
Cyber-shot U DSC-U40	$199.95	2	None	16MB	Memory Stick	4.7 oz.	For those who value portability and style over advanced features and photo quality.	www.sony.com/pc18 888-496-7669
Cyber-shot U DSC-U60	$249.95	2	None	8MB	Memory Stick	6.7 oz.	A ruggedized, waterproof cam perfect for outdoor enthusiasts who want a simple shooter.	
Cyber-shot DSC-P72	$269.95	3.2	3x	16MB	Memory Stick	9.5 oz.	Offers fast performance, vivid images, and moderate mix of easy-to-use features.	
Mavica MVC-FD200	$299.95	2	3x	None	Floppy disk or Memory Stick	18.4 oz.	Limited appeal for heavy cam with floppy-storage option.	

THE BEST RECENTLY REVIEWED DIGITAL CAMERAS (3.2 MEGAPIXEL AND UNDER)

Canon PowerShot A75 • $245 • Editors' Rating: 8.0
Its high-speed capture, very good image quality, and manual exposure controls will appeal to snapshooters who like to get creative.

Canon PowerShot S1 IS • $359 • Editors' Rating: 7.8
The stabilized 10x zoom is a deal maker for shooters who'll frequently take distance shots but don't want to make large prints.

Konica Minolta DiMage Xg • $249 • Editors' Rating: 7.8
Slim enough for your front pocket, this point-and-shoot camera is easy to use and sports a nifty internal zoom lens.

Konica Minolta DiMage Xg

Wishing All Our Customers a Happy and Healthy Holiday Season

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All products are brand new, factory fresh and include USA warranty!

www.beachcamera.com

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203 Route 22 East Green Brook, NJ 08812
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NEW!

optura 400/500

DIGIC | Print/Share BUTTON | 10x/200x OPTICAL ZOOM/ DIGITAL ZOOM

The Perfect Union of Video and Photography

Enjoy the convenience of holding a digital video camcorder and digital camera all in one hand. Low and compact, the Optura 400 camcorder features a swivel grip and palm pad... perfect comfort when shooting long days at sporting events or marathon birthday parties. It offers 2.2-megapixel resolution for fine video and photo details, a 10x optical zoom lens, image stabilization, built-in SD/MMC memory card slot, PictBridge compatibility and much more!

Step-up features found in the Optura 500:

•The Optura 500 adds a high-resolution 2.5 inch LCD (211,000 pixels compared to the 400's 123,000) •It supports USB 2.0 for video •Offering improved compression over Motion JPEG, the Optura 500's advanced MPEG4 allows you to record the full length of your SD Card in high-quality 325 x 288 resolution. •A Mini Video Light is included that is approximately 4x brighter than a conventional white LED, enabling you to shoot color in low-light at distances up to 4.9 feet away. And the supplied Ring Light Adapter works with the Mini Video Light to reduce shadows and provide uniform brightness when shooting video of close-up subjects (approximately 1.2 to 19.7 inches away).

XL2

3CCD Super Low Light | SuperRange OPTICAL IMAGE STABILIZER

NEW!

Intentionally Overengineered

The Canon XL2 allows you to capture images closer to the finished product than ever before. An Open Architecture philosophy, performance found only in much more expensive video cameras, Total Image Control and the solid foundation of Genuine Canon Optics, interchangeable lens capability and superb Canon image processing quality are united in the XL2. Never before has so much creative power been put in the hands of the film maker, video artist, and corporate and event videographer. The XL2 is a standard definition DV camcorder which records DV-format digital video on Mini-DV cassettes. It retains the XL lens mount and is compatible with all existing XL lenses. The standard XL2 kit is packaged with a new 20x automatic lens containing Flourite optical elements and Optical Image Stabilization, two Neutral Density filters, focus and zoom presets and selectable focus speeds.

CANON ACCESSORIES
We Carry filters, Wide-Angle/Teleconverters, Cases, MiniDV Cassettes, Batteries, Tripods for every Canon Camcorder.
Visit Us On-line
www.beachcamera.com

optura 30

Print/Share BUTTON | RGB Primary Color Filter | Motion JPEG

Travel Light, Travel Right

- Features a 12x Optical Zoom/240x Digital Zoom with Canon's Image Stabilizer.
- DV Photo Plus Technology integrates Canon's renowned optics; a 2.2-megapixel CCD image sensor, the exclusive DIGIC DV Image Processor, and the Print and Share that makes it easy to print photos directly from a printer at the touch of a button.
- New Advanced Color Control System optimizes color according to the shooting situations RGB Primary Color Filter that separates light passing through the lens into red, green and blue color components in much the same way as professional camcorders process color, yielding truer more natural looking colors. • High Resolution 16:9 Widescreen mode utilizes the entire width of the CCD retaining image quality and providing a wider horizontal angle of view that is ideal for widescreen TV's.

ZR90

XGA High Resolution Photos | 22x/440x OPTICAL ZOOM / DIGITAL ZOOM | Exif Print

The Power to Make Time Stand Still

Whether spending a summer day at the beach, viewing the beauty of crisp fall foliage, or celebrating the joy and warmth of the holiday season, Canon's new ZR90 camcorder delivers ultra-clear images in stunning real-life color. FeaturingCanon's exceptional 22x Optical Zoom Lens and state-of-the-art DIGIC DV technology, the ZR90 lets you take incredible video AND photos simultaneously. Since video and photos have different color requirements, DIGIC DV utilizes two different color techniques to maximize video quality on a TV and still image quality for print or computer display. Super Night Mode and Night Plus Mode enhances the camera's low-light image sensitivity and capture capability with an assist lamp which lights up automatically responding to the brightness of the subject in Super Night Mode, or stays on at all times in the Night Plus mode.

We carry Cameras, Digital Cameras, Camcorders, VCR's, DVD's, Audio, Printers, Scanners, PDA's and more

From: Canon Nikon KONICA MINOLTA OLYMPUS SONY FUJI Kodak PENTAX HEWLETT PACKARD JVC Panasonic SHARP palm CASIO TAMRON SAMSUNG KYOCERA EPSON Pioneer DANE-ELEC NEC TOSHIBA iRIVER bogen PINNACLE SYSTEMS AZDEN zenith CENTURY PRECISION OPTICS

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Canon & Beach; a new definition of Digital Video

Canon

ELURA 60 ELURA 65 ELURA 70

Life is full of special occasions that we wish could be savored forever -- the ultimate vacation, the excitement of a high school graduation ceremony, your family's first trip abroad, the antics of your favorite pet. With Canon's new line of Elura camcorders, no matter where you go the moment never has to end. Elura camcorders feature Canon's DV Photo Plus. DV Photo Plus unleashes the full digital imaging power of your Canon Megapixel camcorder, promising a superior level of clarity, color and excellence for video and photos.

ELURA 60/ELURA 65/ELURA 70

18x/360x
16x/320x
14x/280x
OPTICAL ZOOM/ DIGITAL ZOOM

DV PHOTO PLUS

PictBridge Exif Print

The Digital Camcorder for Every Occasion

DV Photo Plus achieves premium-quality video and photos by combining four key technologies

Genuine Canon Optics: Each camcorder has a unique lens that matches its CCD for optimal quality. Our camcorder lenses feature the same distinguished quality found in 35mm cameras and broadcast TV cameras.

Megapixel CCD Image Sensor: Whether you are shooting video or photos with the camcorder, you will get the best results. The CCD works like film -- when light is captured by the sensor, it registers an image and advanced processing converts the pixels into digital data creating your video or photos.

DIGIC DV: This makes it possible to achieve accurate color for both video and digital photos. Since video and digital photos have different color requirements, DIGIC DV utilizes two different color techniques to maximize video quality on a TV and still image quality for print or computer display.

Print and Share from your camcorder! Print photos directly to a select Canon or any PictBridge compatible printer or transfer images onto your computer with a simple touch of a button. It's like having your very own photo lab at home.

Zoom in on Superior Images: The Elura 70, Elura 65 and Elura 60 offer a high-magnification 18x, 16x and 14x optical zoom lens respectively, taking full advantage of the DV format. With the Elura 70, you can also attach the supplied WA-34 Wide Attachment (0.7x), giving you a wide perspective for indoor shots or panoramic views

Take Continuous Shots at the Press of a Button: With the Elura's improved Continuous Shooting Mode, you can capture a rapid succession of digital photos to the memory card just like a camera's motor drive. Shoot 3 images/second at 1280x360 resolution, and an incredible 5 images/second at 640x480 resolution.

Enjoy Wide-screen Images (Elura 65 and 70): With the Elura 70 and Elura 65, you can record high-resolution video in 16:9 format for playback on wide-screen TVs. Unlike systems that record a vertically stretched picture, the Elura 70/65 uses the full width of the CCD, resulting in a wide-screen picture that has higher quality and shows more of the action happening at either end of the screen.

Internet Video Chat The Elura 70 Kit comes with DV Messenger2 software, allowing you to use your Canon camcorder for Internet Video Chat with Microsoft Windows Messenger through IEEE1394.

optura Xi

DiG!C DV

ADVANCED ACCESSORY SHOE

11x/220x
9x/36x
OPTICAL ZOOM/DIGITAL ZOOM

Yes You CAN have it All!

- Capture vibrant video and brilliant two megapixel memories which can then be directly printed on any PictBridge-enabled photo printer
- 3.5" LCD viewscreen and an optical image stabilizer, which is effective for both video and digital still photos • Aperture Priority (AP); shutter priority (TV); Zebra Pattern for creative exposure control; a manual focus ring; and an advanced accessory shoe for attaching an optional video light or directional microphone.

GL2

3CCD Super Low Light

USB UNIVERSAL SERIAL BUS

ANALOG▸DIGITAL CONVERTER

Truly Customize Your Shooting Experience

- 3 CCD with Pixel Shift Technology for super high resolution and super low light capability
- 3 shooting modes: normal movie, digital photo and frame movie • Full manual controls and slow shutter speed • Uses Canon EF 35mm lenses with optional EF adapter and select EOS speedlite compatibility

DVD BURNERS

NEED TO KNOW

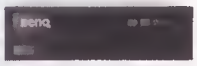
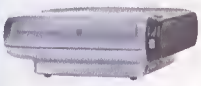
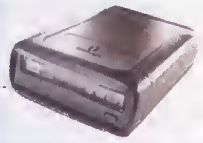
INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL If you don't mind opening your PC's case, you'll save a sizable chunk of change purchasing an internal drive that you install in an empty 5.25-inch drive bay. External drives, on the other hand, connect to your system via a USB or FireWire port. You'll pay a premium, however, for an external drive's portability and setup ease.

FORMAT When DVD burners first emerged a couple of years ago, buyers had to make an often-confusing choice between two incompatible formats: DVD-R/DVD-RW ("minus") and DVD+R/DVD+RW ("plus"). Thankfully, drive manufacturers began offering multiformat drives that can write and rewrite to both formats. For maximum compatibility, purchase only a multiformat drive.

SPEED How fast a drive can read, write, and rewrite a disc is measured in terms of "x." If you're on a limited budget, look for a drive that can record (or "burn") DVDs at 4x—that is, in approximately 15 minutes for a full disc. Currently, 8x drives are the sweet spot between price and performance, with new 12x drives selling for slightly more. At press time, 16x drives were just being introduced.

DUAL-LAYER SUPPORT "Dual-layer" refers to recently introduced technology that allows two recording layers to fit on the single side of a DVD, effectively doubling a disc's storage capacity from 4.7GB to 8.5GB. While perfect for those who need to archive huge amounts of data, dual-layer burning currently maxes out at 2.4x speed, and dual-layer discs might not play in some DVD players. You may want to hold off purchasing a dual-layer drive—or at least curb your expectations—until the kinks are worked out.

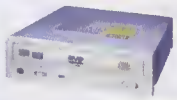
—Sean Portnoy, Hardware Editor

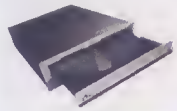
Model	Price	Internal/ External	Format	CD/DVD Read Speeds	Write Speeds*	Rewrite Speeds**	Interface	Editor's Take	Find Out More
BENQ									
DW83DA	$129	Internal	DVD+RW (dual layer)	4Dx/12x	24x/8x/NA/2.4x	1Dx/4x/NA/NA	IDE	Decently priced for dual-layer drive, but doesn't record to DVD-R or DVD-RW.	www.benq.com 866-7DD-2367
DW161D	$129	Internal	DVD±RW	4Dx/16x	4Dx/16x/16x/NA	24x/4x/4x/NA	IDE	If you don't want to gamble on dual-layer, this is the cheapest 16x-writer option.	
DW1620	$149	Internal	DVD±RW (dual layer)	4Dx/16x	4Dx/16x/16x/2.4x	24x/4x/4x/NA	IDE	Great specs, but Pioneer's DVR-AD8XL does dual-layer at 4x.	
HEWLETT PACKARD									
DVD Writer 42Di	$129.99	Internal	DVD±RW	4Dx/12x	24x/8x/8x/NA	1Dx/4x/4x/NA	IDE	Priced a little high for an 8x dual-format internal drive.	www.hp.com 888-999-4747
DVD Writer DVD42De	$149.99	External	DVD±RW	4Dx/12x	24x/8x/8x/NA	1Dx/4x/4x/NA	USB 2.D, FireWire	Well-priced for an external drive that can write to dual formats at 8x.	
DVD Movie Writer DC4DD0	$249	External	DVD±RW	4Dx/12x	24x/Bx/Bx/NA	16x/4x/4x/NA	USB 2.D	Built-in video-capture hardware, wealth of software offset high price.	
I/OMAGIC									
IDVDRWBD	$149.99	Internal	DVD±RW	4Dx/12x	4Dx/8x/4x/NA	24x/4x/2x/NA	IDE	Expensive, considering it only rewrites to DVD-RW at 2x.	www.iomagic.com 949-7D7-4BDD
IDVDBDBE	$179.99	External	DVD±RW	4Dx/12x	4Dx/8x/4x/NA	24x/4x/2x/NA	USB 2.D	More expensive than the IDVDRW8D, but external drive adds flexibility.	
IOMEGA									
Super DVD Writer 8x All-Format	$199.95	External	DVD±RW, DVD-RAM	32x/12x	24x/Bx/4x/NA	16x/4x/2x/3x	USB 2.D	Puts DVD-RAM writing in a portable, but only burns to DVD-RW at 2x.	www.iomega.com B88-516-8467
Super DVD Writer 12x Dual-Format	$249.95	External	DVD±RW (dual layer)	4Dx/1Dx	4Dx/12x/Bx/2.4x	24x/4x/4x/NA	USB 2.D	Pricey, but offers dual-layer and 12x DVD+R burning in external drive.	
Super DVD QuikTouch Video Burner 12x	$329.95	External	DVD±RW (dual layer)	4Dx/1Dx	4Dx/12x/8x/2.4x	24x/4x/4x/NA	USB 2.D	Adds a direct connection to camcorder or VCR to the 12x Dual-Format drive.	
LACIE									
8X Internal DVD+/-RW Double Layer	$129	Internal	DVD±RW (dual-layer)	4Dx/12x	32x/Bx/8x/2.4x	16x/4x/4x/NA	IDE	Reasonable price for dual-layer drive, complete with Roxio software bundle.	www.lacie.com 5D3-B44-45D2
8X d2 DL DVD±RW	$169	External	DVD±RW (dual-layer)	4Dx/12x	32x/8x/8x/2.4x	16x/4x/4x/NA	USB 2.D, FireWire	Speedy portable burner compatible with both Mac and Windows.	

= Editors' Choice * Speeds expressed as CD-R/DVD+R/DVD-R/double-layer DVD+R ** Speeds expressed as CD-RW/DVD+RW/DVD-RW/DVD-RAM

NA = Not applicable

Model	Price	Internal/ External	Format	CD/DVD Read Speeds	Write Speeds*	Rewrite Speeds**	Interface	Editor's Take	Find Out More
LG ELECTRONICS									
GSA-4D828	$175	Internal	DVD±RW, DVD-RAM	32x/12x	24x/8x/8x/NA	16x/4x/4x/3x	IDE	Inexpensive solution if you seek DVD-RAM support in addition to DVD±RW.	us.lge.com 800-243-0000
GSA-412D8	$199.95	Internal	DVD±RW, DVD-RAM (dual layer)	32x/12x	24x/8x/8x/2.4x	16x/4x/4x/3x	IDE	Dual-layer drive supports five DVD formats, but has problems writing to 12x discs.	
LITE-ON IT									
SOHW-832S	$89.99	Internal	DVD±RW (dual layer)	40x/12x	4Dx/8x/8x/2.4x	24x/4x/4x/NA	IDE	A good dual-layer DVD burner at an inexpensive price.	www.liteonamericas.com 408-935-5353
SOHW-1213S	$75	Internal	DVD±RW	48x/12x	48x/12x/8x/NA	24x/4x/4x/NA	IDE	Writes 12x to DVD+R and bundles high-quality Nero burning software.	
SOHW-812S	$75	Internal	DVD±RW	40x/12x	40x/8x/8x/NA	24x/4x/4x/NA	IDE	8x writing to both formats for just over $100.	
MEMOREX PRODUCTS									
16x Dual Format Double-Layer	$149.99	Internal	DVD±RW (dual layer)	48x/16x	48x/16x/8x/2.4x	24x/4x/4x/NA	IDE	Similar specs, price to BenQ DW1620, but writes CDs at 48x, DVD-R at only 8x.	www.memorex.com 877-474-8548
True 8X Dual Format	$229.99	External	DVD±RW	40x/12x	24x/8x/8x/NA	24x/4x/4x/NA	USB 2.0, FireWire	Costlier than other external drives with similar or better specs.	
PIONEER ELECTRONICS									
DVR-A07X	$120	Internal	DVD±RW	40x/12x	24x/8x/8x/NA	24x/4x/4x/NA	IDE	Scant documentation, but performance and bundled software compensate.	www.pioneerelectronics.com 800-444-6784
DVR-A08XL	$179.99	Internal	DVD±RW (dual layer)	4Dx/16x	32x/16x/16x/4x	24x/4x/4x/NA	IDE	First dual-format 16x writer and 4x dual-layer burner on the market.	
DVR-SK12D	$349	External	DVD±RW	24x/8x	16x/2.4x/2x/NA	24x/2.4x/2x/NA	USB 2.0, FireWire	Svelte like Sony's PCGA-DDRW2, but trails it in speed ratings.	
PLEXTOR									
PX-708A	$169	Internal	DVD±RW	40x/12x	40x/8x/4x/NA	24x/4x/2x/NA	IDE	If you don't need 12x DVD writing, offers great 8x burning, even on 4x media.	www.plextor.com 800-886-3935
PX-712A	$179	Internal	DVD±RW	48x/16x	48x/12x/8x/NA	24x/4x/4x/NA	IDE	Very fast DVD burner, with an excellent manual for newbies.	
PX-712UF	$299	External	DVD±RW	48x/16x	48x/12x/8x/NA	24x/4x/4x/NA	USB 2.0, FireWire	Similar specs to PX-712A, but in a portable package.	
SONY ELECTRONICS									
DRU-54DA	$159.99	Internal	DVD±RW	40x/12x	40x/12x/8x/NA	24x/4x/4x/NA	IDE	A 12x writer to DVD+R, but the DRU-700A has dual-layer burning for the same price.	www.sony.com/pc18 888-496-7669
DRU-700A	$159.99	Internal	DVD±RW (dual layer)	4Dx/12x	4Dx/8x/8x/2.4x	24x/4x/4x/NA	IDE	Like Lite-On's SOHW-832S, a good dual-layer drive, with overall good performance.	
DRX-700UL	$259.99	External	DVD±RW (dual layer)	40x/12x	40x/8x/8x/2.4x	24x/4x/4x/NA	USB 2.0, FireWire	Making dual-layer burning portable, it's the external sibling of the DRU-7D0A.	
PCGA-DDRW2	$399.99	External	DVD±RW	24x/8x	16x/4x/4x/NA	8x/2.4x/2x/NA	FireWire	Slim external drive weighs less than a pound and stands under an inch tall.	
TDK ELECTRONICS									
Indi DVD 840G	$89.99	Internal	DVD±RW	4Dx/12x	4Dx/8x/4x/NA	24x/4x/2x/NA	IDE	Built on Plextor's PX-708A hardware, and delivers similarly fast performance.	www.tdk.com 516-535-2600
Indi DVD 880N	$149.99	External	DVD±RW	4Dx/12x	4Dx/8x/8x/NA	16x/4x/2x/NA	USB 2.0, FireWire	Decent price for 8x external drive; comes bundled with Roxio software.	
Indi DVD 12808	$189.99	Internal	DVD±RW	48x/12x	48x/12x/8x/NA	24x/4x/4x/NA	IDE	Priced slightly high for a 12x internal drive; offers a good software bundle.	
TOSHIBA AMERICA									
SD-R5272	$99	Internal	DVD±RW	40x/12x	32x/8x/8x/NA	10x/4x/4x/NA	IDE	An average performer, but wisely bundles Nero burning software.	www.toshiba.com 800-316-0928





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- 1.8 inch LCD monitor
- 18-70mm AF-S DX f/3.5-4.5G IF-ED Zoom-Nikkor lens
- 3D Digital Matrix Image meter for precise exposure control
- TTL auto white balance and six manual modes
- Flexible Digital Vari-Program modes
- Nikon, Inc. limited warranty

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- 8.0 effective megapixels
- 8x Optical Zoom-Nikkor ED lens/35-280mm
- Electronic Viewfinder and Vari-Angle LCD
- Full-motion video with sound for up to 35 seconds
- Time-lapse Movie Mode
- RAW Image Data Recording Mode
- Nikon, Inc. limited warranty

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Nikon® N75™

- Full Auto mode and five Vari-Program modes
- Three-mode Focus Area Selector switch
- Dynamic autofocus system
- Automatic built-in, pop-up Speedlight with six versatile flash modes
- 25-segment 3D Matrix Metering
- On-screen battery/film indicators
- Lightweight and compact design
- Nikon, Inc. limited warranty

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- 8.2 Megapixel CMOS Sensor
- DiG!C II Image Processor
- Enhanced Color and White Balance Settings
- 9-Point High-precision AF with Multi-controller
- High-speed Continuous Shooting
- Rigid Magnesium Alloy Body

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- 7.1 Megapixel CCD
- 35-140mm (35mm equivalent) / 4x Optical Zoom
- DiG!C Image Processor and iSAPS Technology
- 9-point AiAF for Precise and Accurate Focus
- New Ergonomic SLR-style Grip
- 2-inch LCD Monitor

$CALL

SONY DSC-T3

- 5.1 Megapixel / 3x Optical Zoom
- Ultra-slim Design
- 2.5 inch Clear Photo Hybrid LCD
- Instant Startup and Shutter Release
- Cyber-shot® Station for TV/PC Connection
- Continuous Auto Focus
- Record TV Quality MPEG Video

$CALL

PENTAX Optio S5i

- 5.0 Megapixel CCD
- All Glass smc PENTAX 3x Optical Zoom Lens (35-105mm), 12x Combined
- 1.8 inch LCD Monitor Viewable in Direct Sunlight
- Ultra Lightweight Aluminum Alloy Body
- Movie Mode with Sound Recording
- 0.01 Shutter Release Lag Time

$CALL

KONICA MINOLTA DiMAGE A2

- 8.0 Megapixel
- 7x optical / 2x Digital AD Glass Zoom Lens (28-200 mm equivalent)
- High Performance SLR-type Digital Camera
- High-resolution digital movies with audio
- Super Fine EVF With a Wide 32° Viewing Angle
- 3-D Predictive Focus Control
- Anti-Shake CCD-shift Mechanism

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- 4.0 Megapixel, 1/2.5 inch CCD with Primary Color Filter
- 12x optical / 4x digital AP Zoom Lens
- Rapid Auto Focus and Predictive Focus Control
- High-grade VGA Movie Recording Capacity
- Advanced CCD-shift Anti-Shake system
- Macro and Super Macro Modes

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Quickest Drying Paper on Market

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HOME AND SMALL-OFFICE LASER PRINTERS

NEED TO KNOW

COLOR OR MONOCHROME With a few color-laser models priced under $1,000, some small businesses might find it worth the splurge to add some extra pop to its printed materials. For the most part, however, monochrome lasers are a far better value for home users and small businesses.

RESOLUTION Print resolution refers to the maximum number of dots per inch (dpi) a printer creates, measured both horizontally and vertically. For example, a 600x600dpi laser printer lays down a 1-inch square comprising 600 dots across by 600 dots down. Most lasers print 600 dots per inch, which is more than adequate for most text-printing tasks. If you're printing more-demanding jobs—newsletters, for instance—consider models that offer 1,200dpi or even 2,400dpi resolution.

SPEED This spec measures how many pages per minute (ppm) a printer pumps out. Today's laser printers should deliver more than 10ppm of text, with slightly slower speeds for a mixture of text and graphics. Most color lasers do four separate passes on color printouts, so expect much slower speeds.

CONNECTIVITY All printers have either a USB 1.1 interface or the newer, faster USB 2.0. Don't worry too much if your system doesn't have USB 2.0—the two standards get along just fine, and USB 1.1 is fast enough for printing. Workgroup printers also support printing over a network using a standard Ethernet cable with an RJ-45 connector. For even better mobility, many models support printing wirelessly, using infrared, Bluetooth, and Wi-Fi access points with built-in print servers.

—Sean Portnoy, Hardware Editor

Model	Price	Monochrome/ Color	Maximum Resolution	Memory	Rated Text-Print Speed (Mono/Color)	Compatibility	Editor's Take	Find Out More
BROTHER INTERNATIONAL								
HL-1440	$179	Monochrome	1,200x600dpi	2MB	15ppm	PC, Mac	An oldie but a goodie: top-notch performance and output.	www.brother.com 908-704-1700
HL-5140	$229.99	Monochrome	2,400x600dpi	16MB	21ppm	PC, Mac	Fast, with good text quality, but only mediocre graphics quality.	
HL-2700CN	$699.99	Monochrome, color	2,400x600dpi	64MB	31ppm/8ppm	PC, Mac	Good monochrome text speeds, though color-graphics output could be better.	
DELL								
Laser Printer 1700	$199	Monochrome	1,200x1,200dpi	16MB	25ppm	PC	Promises faster print speeds, higher maximum resolution than its more-expensive sibling.	www.dell.com 800-624-6139
MFP Laser Printer 1600n (see p.50)	$399	Monochrome	600x600dpi	32MB	22ppm	PC	All-in-one provides impressive overall print and scan quality, along with Ethernet interface.	
HEWLETT-PACKARD								
LaserJet 1012	$199.99	Monochrome	600x600dpi	8MB	15ppm	PC, Mac	Delivers good print quality and speed but also high per-page costs.	www.hp.com 888-999-4747
LaserJet 1150	$229.99	Monochrome	600x600dpi	8MB	18ppm	PC, Mac	Offers a small speed bump over the 1012 for a small price premium.	
LaserJet 1300	$399.99	Monochrome	1,200x1,200dpi	16MB	20ppm	PC, Mac	Subpar print quality mars its fast printing and expansion options.	
LaserJet 2300	$649.99	Monochrome	1,200x1,200dpi	32MB	25ppm	PC, Mac	Workgroup printer with lesser specs, higher price than IBM InfoPrint 1412's.	
Color LaserJet 2550n	$699.99	Monochrome, color	600x600dpi	64MB	20ppm/4ppm	PC, Mac	Great print quality, but bare-bones configuration and slow color-print speeds detract value.	
Color LaserJet 3500	$799.99	Monochrome, color	600x600dpi	64MB	12ppm/12ppm	PC, Mac	Excellent monochrome, color text printing, but a space hog.	
IBM								
InfoPrint 1412	$399	Monochrome	2,400x2,400dpi	32MB	27ppm	PC	Designed for small businesses and workgroups; offers PostScript support.	www.ibm.com 800-358-6661
KONICA MINOLTA								
PagePro 1250W	$169	Monochrome	1,200x1,200dpi	8MB	17ppm	PC	Fast print speeds and good-quality text, plus low cost of consumables.	printer.konicaminolta.net 800-705-2001
PagePro 1350	$179.99	Monochrome	1,200x1,200dpi	8MB	21ppm	PC	Provides a speed boost over the 1250W for a few more dollars.	
PagePro 1250E	$299	Monochrome	1,200x1,200dpi	16MB	17ppm	PC, Mac	Nicely treads the middle ground between personal and small-business-class laser.	
Magicolor 2300W	$499	Monochrome, color	1,200x600dpi	32MB	16ppm/4ppm	PC	Well-priced, but monochrome print speed trails other color laser printers'.	
LEXMARK INTERNATIONAL								
E232	$199	Monochrome	600x600dpi	16MB	22ppm	PC, Mac	Rated one of the fastest under-$200 lasers available.	www.lexmark.com 800-539-6275

= Editors' Choice

Model	Price	Monochrome/ Color	Maximum Resolution	Memory	Rated Text-Print Speed (Mono/Color)	Compatibility	Editor's Take	Find Out More
E330	$419	Monochrome	1,200x1,200dpi	32MB	27ppm	PC, Mac	For $220 more, the E330 offers faster printing than the E232, plus double the internal memory.	www.lexmark.com 800-539-6275
E332n	$499	Monochrome	1,200x1,200dpi	32MB	27ppm	PC, Mac	Similar specs to the E330, along with internal network adapter.	
C510	$619	Monochrome, color	1,200x1,200dpi	64MB	30ppm/8ppm	PC, Mac	Offers fast color, monochrome printing, plus true PostScript and PCL emulation.	
OKI DATA AMERICAS								
B4100	$209.99	Monochrome	1,200x600dpi	8MB	19ppm	PC	Cheapest of Oki Data LED printers serves up good print speed for the price.	www.okidata.com 800-654-3282
B4250	$282.99	Monochrome	1,200x600dpi	16MB	23ppm	PC	Doubles the B4100's internal memory, helping to boost its print speeds.	
B4350	$387.99	Monochrome	1,200x600dpi	16MB	23ppm	PC, Mac	Optional networking, PostScript support, but otherwise specs similar to B4250's.	
PANASONIC								
KX-P7305	$285	Monochrome	1,200x600dpi	16MB	19ppm	PC, Mac	A little pricey compared with the competition, but offers PostScript support.	www.panasonic.com 800-662-3537
KX-P7310	$449	Monochrome	1,200x600dpi	16MB	19ppm	PC, Mac	Pricey for its modest feature set; includes Ethernet interface.	
SAMSUNG								
ML-1740	$149.99	Monochrome	600x600dpi	8MB	17ppm	PC	Inexpensive laser offers good print speeds for the price.	www.samsungusa.com 800-726-7864
ML-2250	$229.99	Monochrome	1,200x1,200dpi	16MB	22ppm	PC	A step up from the ML-1740, with double the internal memory and faster print speeds.	
ML-1750	$249.99	Monochrome	1,200x600dpi	8MB	16ppm	PC, Mac	Compact printer offers USB 2.0 interface but also slower rated speeds than competition.	
CLP-500	$499.99	Monochrome, color	1,200x1,200dpi	64MB	21ppm/5ppm	PC, Mac	Low-cost, fast, and includes built-in duplex unit, but color text quality is only so-so.	
ML-2152W	$649.99	Monochrome	1,200x1,200dpi	16MB	20ppm	PC	Designed for workgroups, it features an Ethernet interface and duplex printing.	
XEROX								
Phaser 3130	$299	Monochrome	1,200x600dpi	32MB	17ppm	PC	Small footprint, 32MB internal memory are highlights of this sub-$300 model.	www.office.xerox.com 888-247-5107
Phaser 3450B	$499	Monochrome	600x600dpi	32MB	25ppm	PC	Large paper capacity and high maximum duty cycle make it perfect for small businesses.	
Phaser 4500B	$979	Monochrome	1,200x1,200dpi	48MB	36ppm	PC, Mac	Fast, capable printer perfect for small businesses with plans to grow.	
Phaser B400B	$999	Monochrome, color	600x600dpi	128MB	24ppm/24ppm	PC, Mac	Solid-inker outputs color graphics quickly but delivers only fair overall print quality.	

THE BEST RECENTLY REVIEWED HOME AND SMALL-OFFICE LASER PRINTERS

Lexmark C510 • $619 • Editors' Rating: 7.9
Although add-ons such as additional paper trays can be expensive, the C510 is a nearly perfect sub-$1,000 color laser printer for small businesses.

Konica Minolta PagePro 1250W • $169 • Editors' Rating: 7.6
This personal laser offers good print speed and quality, both parallel and USB ports, and top-notch phone support. And the low price is hard to beat.

HP LaserJet 1012 • $199.99 • Editors' Rating: 7.5
The affordable LaserJet 1012 delivers good print quality and speed. Other nice features, such as double-sided printing, make this a great choice for students and families.

HP LaserJet 1012

HARD DRIVES

NEED TO KNOW

INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL Internal hard drives cost less but are more difficult to install than an external drive since they require opening the case. External drives, which connect via USB or FireWire ports, are more expensive but offer more flexibility—they can be used on multiple machines or taken on the road.

SIZE For upgrading an older system, consider drives from 80GB to 160GB, which should provide plenty of storage for the future. Because of the size of the files they handle, budding digital photographers, video directors, and gamers should consider a drive with 160GB to 250GB.

ATA OR SATA The most affordable drives can be found using the ATA interface, also known as IDE. But this technology will eventually be eclipsed by Serial ATA (SATA), which employs a serial connection to transfer data between components. Currently capable of speeds up to 150MB per second, SATA uses thinner, longer cables than ATA, allowing for better air circulation inside the PC. The average user looking for cheap storage should opt for an ATA drive; gamers who want maximum performance might consider the more expensive SATA models.

SPEED The speed at which a disk spins, measured in revolutions per minute (rpm), is directly related to how fast it can retrieve data. Your best bet is an ATA or SATA drive spinning at 7,200rpm. At the high end, speeds reach 10,000rpm, but these drives are costly and their capacities relatively limited (a maximum of 74GB).

BUFFER Look for a drive with an 8MB buffer, rather than a 2MB buffer. The larger buffer enables the drive to deliver data more quickly and can noticeably enhance performance. *—Sean Portnoy, Hardware Editor*

Model	Price	Internal/ External	Capacity	Buffer Memory	Spin Rate (rpm)	Interface	Editor's Take	Find Out More
FUJITSU COMPUTER PRODUCTS OF AMERICA								
MHT 2030AT	$90	Internal	30GB	2MB	4,200rpm	Ultra ATA/100	Installing this small, slow drive will be an upgrade only if your current hard drive is ancient.	www.fcpa.com 408-432-6333
MHT 2060AH	$140	Internal	60GB	8MB	5,400rpm	Ultra ATA/100	A decent starter model, but you should consider a drive that spins at 7,200rpm.	
MHT 2080AT	$170	Internal	80GB	8MB	4,200rpm	Ultra ATA/100	An exceptionally slow drive at a time when 7,200rpm is becoming the standard.	
MHT 2080BH	$264	Internal	80GB	8MB	5,400rpm	Serial ATA	A lot of money to pay for a slow drive, despite the SATA interface.	
HITACHI GLOBAL STORAGE TECHNOLOGIES								
Deskstar 7K80	$60	Internal	40GB	2MB	7,200rpm	Ultra ATA/100	A decent price for a 40GB drive, but its 2MB buffer will hamper performance.	www.hitachigst.com 800-448-2244
Deskstar 180GXP-120	$95	Internal	120GB	2MB	7,200rpm	Ultra ATA/100	2MB buffer may affect performance, but still an acceptable choice for a second drive.	
Endurastar N4K20	$139	Internal	20GB	8MB	4,200rpm	Ultra ATA/66	Made to withstand extreme temperatures, this costly 2.5-inch drive isn't necessary for typical users.	
Deskstar 7K250	$199	Internal	250GB	8MB	7,200rpm	Serial ATA	Size and speed combo make this a good choice; Serial ATA is a bonus.	
Deskstar 7K400	$449	Internal	400GB	8MB	7,200rpm	Serial ATA	The high price may intimidate, but this fast, spacious drive is a great choice for graphics pros.	
IOMEGA								
HDD 80GB USB 2.0 Desktop	$129.95	External	80GB	8MB	7,200rpm	USB 2.0	An excellent backup solution, this fast drive is bundled with Symantec's Norton Ghost 2003.	www.iomega.com 888-516-8467
HDD 120GB Internal Hard Drive	$149.99	Internal	120GB	8MB	7,200rpm	Ultra ATA/100	High speed and a solid buffer, but you can get more for your money elsewhere.	
HDD 120GB USB 2.0 Desktop	$169.95	External	120GB	8MB	7,200rpm	USB 2.0	Slightly expensive, but this external drive is a good choice for secondary storage.	
HDD 120GB USB 2.0/FireWire External	$179.95	External	120GB	8MB	7,200rpm	FireWire, USB 2.0	This external drive's FireWire connection may appeal to Mac users.	
HDD 160GB USB 2.0 Desktop	$179.95	External	160GB	8MB	7,200rpm	USB 2.0	A decent deal on a lot of external storage for those with USB 2.0 ports.	
HDD 40GB USB 2.0/FireWire Portable	$229.95	External	40GB	2MB	4,200rpm	FireWire, USB 2.0	This model proves that portability doesn't come cheap. If you're not mobile, you don't need it.	
HDD 250GB USB 2.0 Desktop	$249.95	External	250GB	8MB	7,200rpm	USB 2.0	$1 per gigabyte is not a lot to pay for considerable external space and backup.	
HDD 60GB USB 2.0/FireWire Portable	$279.95	External	60GB	2MB	4,200rpm	FireWire, USB 2.0	Pricey portable drive, with small buffer and slow spin rate.	

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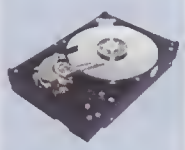
Model	Price	Internal/ External	Capacity	Buffer Memory	Spin Rate (rpm)	Interface	Editor's Take	Find Out More
HOO 250GB USB 2.0/FireWire External	$299.95	External	250GB	8MB	7,200rpm	FireWire, USB 2.0	Graphics pros will love the size and speed of this external drive.	www.iomega.com 888-516-8467
MAXTOR								
Maxtor BOGB Ultra Series	$99.95	Internal	80GB	8MB	7,200rpm	Ultra ATA/133	Solid specs, but even budget buyers should shoot for more space for the price.	www.maxtor.com 800-262-9867
Maxtor 80GB SATA	$109.95	Internal	BOGB	8MB	7,200rpm	Serial ATA	Relatively skimpy storage, but employs new SATA interface.	
Maxtor 160GB Ultra Series	$149.95	Internal	160GB	8MB	7,200rpm	Ultra ATA/133	If you're building a PC from the ground up, this drive is a good place to start.	
Maxtor OneTouch 80GB FireWire/ USB Orive	$159.95	External	BOGB	8MB	7,200rpm	FireWire, USB 2.0	A great backup drive; as name suggests, one touch is all it takes to protect your data.	
Maxtor Ultra 7200 Series 200GB	$179	Internal	200GB	8MB	7,200rpm	Ultra ATA/133	At less than $1 per gigabyte, an excellent upgrade drive.	
Maxtor Atlas 10K III	$199	Internal	37.7GB	8MB	10,000rpm	Ultra 320 SCSI	One of the fastest drives out there, but expensive considering the capacity.	
Maxtor 250GB Ultra Series	$199.95	Internal	250GB	8MB	7,200rpm	Ultra ATA/133	At under $200, an excellent choice for a roomy internal storage upgrade.	
Maxtor 250GB SATA	$229.95	Internal	250GB	8MB	7,200rpm	Serial ATA	High speed and lots of space, plus SATA, make this drive a gamer's delight.	
Maxtor 300GB Ultra Series	$249.95	Internal	300GB	8MB	5,400rpm	Ultra ATA/133	Low on speed but big on space; ideal for multimedia-file backups.	
Maxtor OneTouch 200GB FireWire/ USB Orive	$279.95	External	200GB	8MB	7,200rpm	FireWire, USB 2.0	200GB at 7,200rpm: a great price for state-of-the-art external storage.	
Maxtor OneTouch 300GB FireWire/ USB Orive	$349.95	External	300GB	8MB	7,200rpm	FireWire, USB 2.0	Expensive, but for a graphics pro the external space is probably worth the extra cash.	
SEAGATE TECHNOLOGY								
Barracuda 5400.1	$63	Internal	40GB	2MB	5,400rpm	Ultra ATA/133	Price is low, but a faster drive with more space and a bigger buffer would be a better upgrade.	www.seagate.com 877-271-32B5
Barracuda 7200.7	$99	Internal	80GB	2MB	7,200rpm	Ultra ATA/133	Would be a good drive if found on an entry-level system, but has limited appeal as an upgrade.	
Barracuda 7200.7 Plus	$149	Internal	160GB	8MB	7,200rpm	Ultra ATA/133	Delivers all the specs you should look for when upgrading.	
Barracuda 7200.7 SATA	$169	Internal	200GB	8MB	7,200rpm	Serial ATA	An excellent combination of size, speed, and price, with SATA interface, make this drive a great choice.	
SIMPLETECH								
SimpleOrive External	$136	External	120GB	2MB	7,200rpm	USB 2.0	SimpleTech bundles a backup app with this drive, making it a nice choice for data security.	www.simpletech.com B00-367-7330
SimpleOrive Portable	$163	External	20GB	2MB	4,200rpm	USB 2.0	If you need a portable drive, the price per gigabyte is better with the 40GB version ($190).	
SimpleOrive Deluxe Portable	$429	External	160GB	BMB	7,200rpm	FireWire, USB 2.0	Expensive, but this drive may appeal to the graphics pro on the move.	
SimpleOrive Deluxe External	$469	External	400GB	2MB	7,200rpm	FireWire, USB 2.0	Buffer is small, but this external drive offers immense storage for multimedia pros.	
WESTERN DIGITAL								
W0200EB	$60	Internal	20GB	2MB	5,400rpm	Ultra ATA/100	Even at this price, meager capacity makes this drive a poor upgrade choice.	www.wdc.com 949-672-7000
W0B00JO	$BB.99	Internal	80GB	BMB	7,200rpm	Serial ATA	At this price, this SATA drive would fit well in an entry-level gaming system.	
W01200AB	$99	Internal	120GB	2MB	5,400rpm	Ultra ATA/100	Not a bad choice if you care more about space than speed.	
W01600JB	$149.99	Internal	160GB	BMB	7,200rpm	Ultra ATA/100	A good drive choice for the average consumer.	
W02000JB	$179.99	Internal	200GB	8MB	7,200rpm	Ultra ATA/100	Nice specs and space for the price.	
W02500JB	$199.99	Internal	250GB	BMB	7,200rpm	Ultra ATA/100	The complete kit, with lots of capacity and excellent performance.	
W0250088	$199.99	Internal	250GB	2MB	7,200rpm	Ultra ATA/100	A lot of storage for the price, but 2MB buffer could slow you down.	
W02500JO	$209.99	Internal	250GB	8MB	7,200rpm	Serial ATA	A great combo of speed, buffer size, and capacity, enhanced by SATA interface.	



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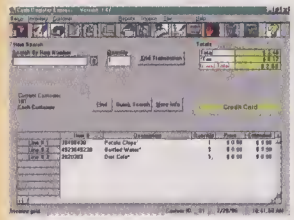

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Model	Price	Internal/ External	Capacity	Buffer Memory	Spin Rate (rpm)	Interface	Editor's Take	Find Out More
H00 250GB USB 2.0/FireWire External	$299.95	External	250GB	8MB	7,200rpm	FireWire, USB 2.0	Graphics pros will love the size and speed of this external drive.	www.iomega.com 888-516-8467
MAXTOR								
Maxtor 80GB Ultra Series	$99.95	Internal	80GB	8MB	7,200rpm	Ultra ATA/133	Solid specs, but even budget buyers should shoot for more space for the price.	www.maxtor.com 800-262-9867
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Maxtor OneTouch 300GB FireWire/ USB Drive	$349.95	External	300GB	8MB	7,200rpm	FireWire, USB 2.0	Expensive, but for a graphics pro the external space is probably worth the extra cash.	
SEAGATE TECHNOLOGY								
Barracuda 5400.1	$63	Internal	40GB	2MB	5,400rpm	Ultra ATA/133	Price is low, but a faster drive with more space and a bigger buffer would be a better upgrade.	www.seagate.com 877-271-3285
Barracuda 7200.7	$99	Internal	80GB	2MB	7,200rpm	Ultra ATA/133	Would be a good drive if found on an entry-level system, but has limited appeal as an upgrade.	
Barracuda 7200.7 Plus	$149	Internal	160GB	8MB	7,200rpm	Ultra ATA/133	Delivers all the specs you should look for when upgrading.	
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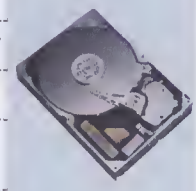

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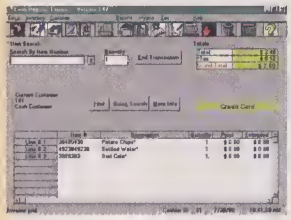

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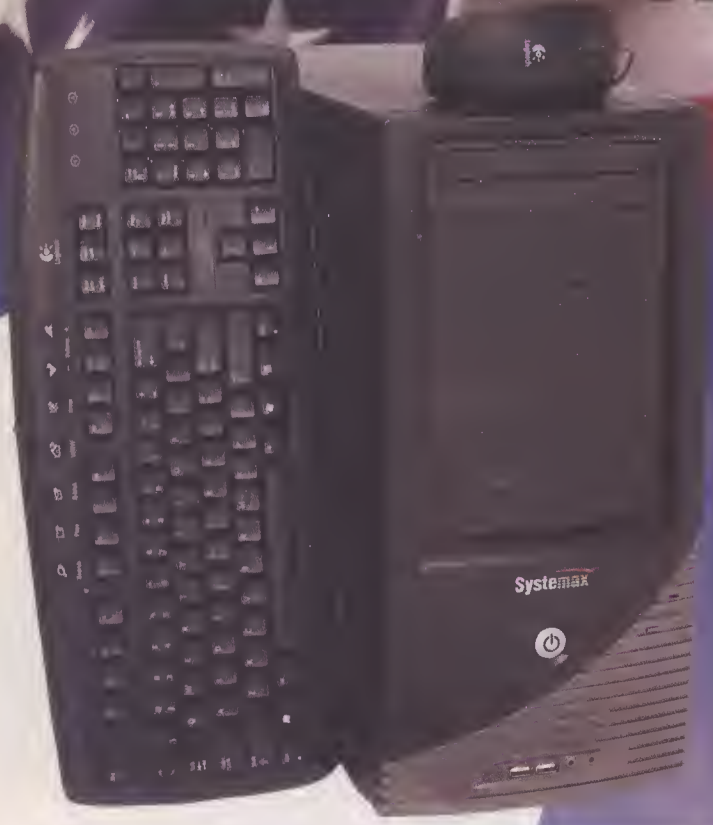

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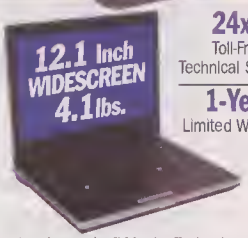

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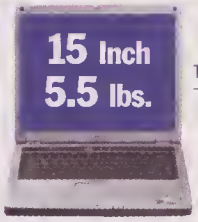

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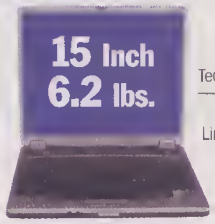

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EVO N600 SERIES, N800 SERIES, N1000 SERIES			48		103
PRESARIO 900 SERIES, 1500 SERIES, 2801, 2805				48	103
PRESARIO 2100,2101,2102,2103,2106,2113,2114,2118				48	103
PRESARIO 2120AP,2120EA,2130EA,2125AP,2126DK,2126EA				48	103
ARMADA 110, E500, E700, V300, M300 SERIES		14	22	65	
ARMADA M700, EVO NOTEBOOK			14	22	65
PRESARIO 12XL, 14XL,17XL,18XL,1400,1800 SERIES	14		22	65	
ARMADA 1500 SERIES, 7000 SERIES			14	25	
ARMADA 4100, 4200 SERIES			36	46	
ARMADA 1100,1120, 1120T, 1125			14	25	
ARMADA 1700,6500,7400,7800,PROSIGNIA 100,6000 SERIES	15	23			
PRESARIO 1000 SERIES		53			
PRESARIO 1200, 1600, 1800 SERIES		10	15	22	65

AST

	4MB	8MB	16MB	32MB	64MB
ASCENTIA 800N, 810N		41	46		64
ASCENTIA 900N ,910N SERIES			46		59
ASCENTIA 950N SERIES			58		72
ASCENTIA J10,J20,J30,J50,J55			29	34	36
ASCENTIA P30,P50,P70, P80				56	99
ASCENTIA A SERIES, M5000, M6000 SERIES			10	17	25

TOSHIBA

	32MB	64MB	128MB	256MB	512MB
SATELLITE 1110,1115,1130,1135,1405,1410,1415,1870				48	103
SATELLITE 1900,1905,1950,1955,2400,2405,2410,2415,2430,2450				48	103
SATELLITES100,5105,5200,5205,A10,A15,A20,A25,M10,M15				48	103
T1900 SERIES, T4500, T4600, T4700, T4800		49		73	
PROTEGE 300,310,320,650CT, 660CDT,		14		25	
PROTEGE 7000, 7010,7020 SERIES			10	15	22
TECRA 8000, 8100, SATELLITE 2800 SERIES			15	22	65
SATELITE PRO 100/200/400 SERIES			56		
SATELITE PRO 300, 440,445,460,470,480			28		74
SATELITE 4000SERIES,TECRA 8200 SERIES			15	22	65
TECRA 750, 780 SERIES		14		25	
SATELLITE 4600, TECRA 9000			15	22	65
TECRA 500CDS/CDT,510CDS/CDT	51	69	(48MB)	84	
TECRA 710, 720, 730, 740		56		110	138

DELL

	32MB	64MB	128MB	256MB	512MB
INSPIRON 1100,500M,5100,5150,600M,8200,8500				48	103
LATITUDE C540,C640,C840,D400,D500,D600,D800,200N				48	103
INSPIRON 8100, 4100, LATITUDE C610			15	22	32
INSPIRON 7500, 3800, 3700, 4000,5000,8000,15			15	22	65
LATTITUDE XP, XPI, LM SERIES				36	
LATTITUDE LM SERIES			36		
LATTITUDE C/S CPI SERIES		14		25	209
INSPIRON 3000 SERIES, 3200,3500, 7000 SERIES	15			22	65

CTX

	8MB	16MB	32MB	64MB
EZ BOOK 700 SERIES, CTX X 95SNS		28	38	36	38
EZ BOOK 700E SERIES, 800 SERIES				14	20

GATEWAY

	32MB	64MB	128MB	256MB	512MB
GATEWAY 400 SERIES NOTEBOOKS, 400S, 400SPX,XL				48	103
GATEWAY 600 SERIES NOTEBOOKS,600L,600S,600X,600YGR				48	103
SOLO 2500, 9550 SERIES			15	22	36
SOLO 2150, 1150, 5300, 9300,9350			15	22	65
GATEWAY SOLO 2100,2200		69		105	
GATEWAY SOLO 230D, 2500 SERIES			15		22
SOLO 3100 XL/LS/SE, 5150 XL/LS/XE			15		22
SOLO 9100 PENTIUM II, PENTIUM MMX SERIES			15		22
SOLO 5100 PENTIUM II, PENTIUM MMX SERIES			14		22

HEWLETT PACKARD

	32MB	64MB	128MB	256MB	512MB
OMNIBOOK 5000C/CT/CTS/VI,5500CT		41		64	129
OMNIBOOK 4000 SERIES		45		42	76
OMNIBOOK 2000, 5700		41	64	133	199
OMNIBOOK 2100, 3100, 3000 SERIES		37	71		129
OMNIBOOK 4100, 7100 SERIES			31		48

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512MB.....$79

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PRINTER MEMORY

HEWLETT PACKARD

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LASERJET III, IIID, 2P, 2P+, 3P, 7550B PLOTTER	39	39	35			
LASERJET IIISI, PAINTJET XL300,	11	12	14	10		
DESIGN JET 600, 650C			14	10		
DESIGNJET 230, 250C, 350C, 330, 650C,			14	10	15	99
DESIGNJET 750C, 750C PLUS, 700			14	10	15	99
DESIGNJET 200,220, LASERJET 4, 4M, 4SI, 4SIMX	11	12	20	10		
DESKJET 1200C, DESKJET 1200C/PS	11	12	20	10		
LASERJET 5L, 5L/FS, 5L XTRA, 6L			24	42		
LASERJET 4P, 4MP	11	12	14	10		
LASERJET 4+, 4M+, 4V, 4MV, 5P, 5MP, 5, 5N, 6P,	11	12	14	10	15	
6MP,COLOR LASERJET, COPYJET M,	11	12	14	10	15	
LASERJET 5SI, 5SIMX, DESKJET 1600C, CN	11	12	14	10	35	99
LASERJET 4000/5000 SERIES, 2100,1100 SERIES					14	18

IBM / LEXMARK PRINTER

	1MB	2MB	4MB	8MB	16MB	32M
LASERPRINTER(4019-001), (4019-E01)	58	79	79(3 Smb)			
LASER PRINTER 4028	58					
LASER PRINTER 6(4029-020), 6A(4029-021),						
6E(4029-040), 10(4029-030), 10A(4029-041),						
10L(4029-040), 4037 5E		18	30			
WINWRITER 600, 400, 200						
VALUE WRITER 600, 300, OPTRA E, EP		18	30			
LASERPRINTER 4039 10P, 10R, 10R DUPLEX,						
12L, 12R, 16L, 16L PLUS	18	20	29			
COLORJET PRINTER PS 4079, 4079 PLUS			20	24		

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altex.com
With a big dose of Texan pride, **Altex Electronics** has corralled a huge inventory of computer and networking gear. Mosey over to the Power Accessories section for line conditioners, power supplies, and uninterruptible power supplies.

amazon.com
Amazon.com is an unparalleled superstore with a massive inventory equaled only by its special features, such as personalized product recommendations and mobile access. The Early Adopter Products pages show what's fresh in electronics, video games, and DVDs.

bestbuy.com
Our readers voted **Best Buy** their favorite place to buy peripherals, handhelds, and storage. The selection in each department is comprehensive and impressive. The best part? You can have your gadget delivered or pick it up at a nearby store.

bhphotovideo.com
In business for more than 30 years, **B&H Photo-Video-Pro Audio** sells digital and film cameras, computers, peripherals, and professional audio equipment. Real-time online assistance and a generous return policy make shopping painless. Check the Open Box Specials and Used Equipment areas for unique deals.

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Big008.com sells a staggering variety of tower, MicroATX, midtower, and minitower cases from Lian Li, Thermaltake, and other manufacturers. You'll find high-tech front-panel displays and tricked-out power supplies in the Case Accessories section.

buy.com
Buy.com's vast million-product inventory includes computer hardware, software, electronics, video games, books, music, and DVDs. Sister site BuyMusic.com delivers music downloads starting at 79 cents a song.

buydig.com
A site for spades and trowels? No, **WorldWide Direct** sells digital tools and toys, including digital cameras, fax machines, PDAs, DVD players, and video-capture devices.

www.cablemax.com
In addition to a substantial variety of computer and networking cables—which the company manufactures itself—**CableMax** sells surge-protection devices, add-on PC cards, electronics tools, and test equipment.

cablestogo.com
The mammoth selection at **Cables To Go** includes esoteric system-specific cables, PDA and cell-phone cables, and rounded cables for improved PC cooling. Use the configurator to create cables for your special needs, and plug into the Connector Guide for help identifying a strange cable or port.

caplinktech.com
Stocked with hard drives, motherboards, and CPUs, **CapLink Technology** can be a system builder's dream come true. The selection is small, but the prices are low and customers leave happy. Shipping is free on orders of $300 or more.

cdw.com
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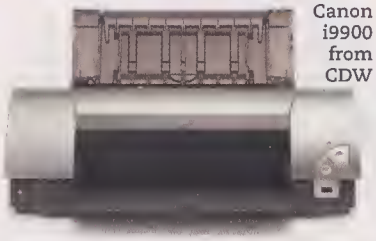

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clubmac.com
Love Macs? Join the club. The selection of Apple hardware and software at **ClubMac** is hard to beat. Click the category tabs to zoom in on a nice selection of add-ons, or check the Blowout Deals page for discounts on open-box and refurbished items.

compusa.com
The well-organized **CompUSA** rounds out the usual selection of PC hardware, peripherals, and accessories with areas devoted to home electronics and wireless gadgets. Set your own price on PCs at CompUSA's auction site.

computers.ebay.com
eBay is an unparalleled auction site and a unique shopping experience. Shoppers can set their own price on components, including new and used PCs, software, tech books, and vintage computers.

computersecurity.com
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consumer-direct.com
A dazzling world of high-definition video and surround-sound audio awaits you at **Consumer Direct Warehouse.** The catalog includes DVD players, speakers, and stereo systems, as well as surge protectors to keep them safe from power glitches.

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dalco.com
Dalco Electronics stocks everything from motherboards to monitors. Bargain hunters will want to start with the specials listed on the home page, which change regularly. But watch out for the 20 percent restocking fee.

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consumersearch.com
ConsumerSearch assembles reviews for a vast array of products from major print and online publications. The site also analyzes and ranks those reviews. You'll find review summaries for **PCs,** consumer electronics, home appliances, and many other items.

dealnews.com
Deal yourself in! Updated daily, **Dealnews** is a fantastic buyer's guide that reports on specials in various Web stores. Check out sister site Dealmac for Apple gotta-haves, and Dealram for memory deals.

notebookreview.com
Be sure to visit **NotebookReview.com** before buying your next laptop: Find a model with ideal specs, and the site will deliver links to media and user reviews, along with price comparisons.

pdabuyersguide.com
PDA Buyer's Guide delivers thorough, unbiased reviews of handhelds, POA phones, software, and accessories. Find out what's good and what's not so good in each model, and ask questions in the discussion forum.

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Want to send a gripe (or even a compliment) to a retailer? **PlanetFeedback.com** will help you be heard by turning your thoughts into a nicely formatted business letter you can customize and send to any of 20,000-plus businesses.

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resellerratings.com
ResellerRatings.com collects shoppers' opinions from almost 6,000 online tech stores. Each merchant is ranked on a scale from zero to 10. For more details about a site's service, read other customers' shopping tales or horror stories.

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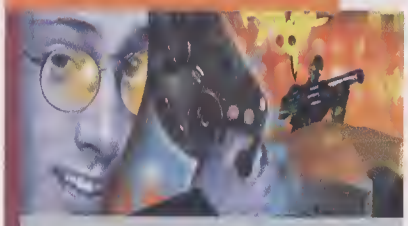
GAMING HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE



chipsbits.com
No matter your gaming-platform preference, **Chips & Bits** has got games for you. You'll find PC, PS2, Xbox, and GameCube titles, a few titles for older consoles, and—for some unplugged fun—a large selection of RPG board and card games.

firingsquad.com
FiringSquad, "home of the hard-core gamer," is sure to fire up your jones for gaming. Features include downloadable games and demos, hardware reviews, and discussion forums. Check out the Optimization Guides for tips on coaxing the best performance from your favorite PC games.

gamesondemand.yahoo.com
You can play full-version commercial games without a CD-ROM with **Yahoo Games on Demand.** Armed with a broadband connection, you can have unlimited play for $14.95 a month ($34.95 for three months), or choose three games for $9.95 a month. Check out game reviews, previews, and news at Yahoo Games Domain (**gamesdomain.yahoo.com**).

overdrivepc.com
Specializing in systems for gamers, by gamers, **Overdrive PC** constructs custom-built 64-bit AMD scream machines with cutting-edge options like overclocking and water cooling. The community-oriented site includes message boards, popular public game servers, and online support.

tronixweb.com
Tired of playing the same warmed-over console games? **Tronix** sells Japanese-import software and accessories for your favorite game platforms, so you can be the only kid (or grown-up) on the block with hard-to-find imported games.

zeuspc.com
ZeusPC builds machines coveted for their power, looks, and value. The Hurricane, Tornado, and Tsunami models are stylish towers. The Thunderstorm packs gaming goodness into a portable form factor.

digitalfotoclub.com
Smile for the cameras. **Digital Foto Discount Club** has a stimulating selection of digital cameras and camcorders, PDAs, and personal audio gadgetry, and is well regarded by its customers.

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Look to **eCost.com** for deals on PC components, software, electronics, and DVDs, with free shipping on orders over $25. You'll be enticed by short-lived but sweet deals in the Bargain Countdown area.

emicrox.com
MicroX-Press will x-cite you with an x-pansive catalog of 60,000-plus hardware and software products. Visit the Systems section to piece together a custom-configured desktop, workstation, server, or rack-mountable PC.

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Yes, **eWaggle.com** has a silly name, but it also has deals on all types of components, most with a 30-day money-back guarantee. Look for the tiny truck icon, which means shipping is free on that product.

frozencpu.com
Focused on PC cooling and case modifications, **FrozenCPU.com** will delight tinkerers and overclockers alike. The catalog of freakishly cool accessories includes transparent PC power supplies, LED-illuminated fans, and modified cases.

harddrive.com
Don't be fooled by the name: **HardDrive.com** sells more than just storage. It also has an extensive selection of motherboards, cases, controller cards, and other components for system builders. The e-mail-notification function will tell you when the price of a coveted item falls.

insight.com
Insight delivers IT products for businesses, including networking hardware, projectors, and servers. Check the weekly Tech Buys page for deals on notebooks, printers, and networking products for the office.

jdr.com
JDR Computer Products stocks a decent selection of PC hardware and accessories, all at reasonable prices. In the electronics section, tinkerers will find electronic components and kits, integrated circuits, and technical reference books.

jncs.com
J&N Computer Services specializes in pretested motherboard/CPU/memory bundles—with an abundance of options for creating your perfect PC. In addition, the site sells bare-bones PCs and a smallish selection of peripherals and accessories.

jr.com
Hardware, software, home-office products, and appliances abound at **J&R Electronics,** a mainstay in New York for 33 years. The online home of the retail store specializes in cameras, both digital and film.

kvm-switches-online.com
Let your monitor, keyboard, and mouse share more than one PC. **KVM Switches Online** is dedicated to keyboard-video-mouse switches. The selection includes models for home, office, and multiple users. You'll also find video splitters and rack-mountable LCD monitors.

laptoptravel.com
If you tote a computer wherever you go, take a trip to **Laptop Travel,** a site that specializes in portable-computing and international-travel gear. You'll find cases, electrical adapters, modem converters, mobile desks, and security accessories.

lik-sang.com
So you think you've seen all the gaming gear there is? You haven't been to **Lik-Sang.com,** an importer of video-game accessories from around the world. You'll discover mod kits for game consoles, hard-to-find imported games, and unusual controllers.

livewarehouse.com
Liven up your PC with a new peripheral from **LiveWarehouse.** You'll find a moderate selection of new components and peripherals, including plenty of optical drives and input devices.

mcglen.com
McGlen Micro sells a full complement of PC peripherals. When you custom-configure a motherboard, CPU, and memory bundle, technicians will assemble and test your creation, and warrant it for two years.

memman.com
Memory Man sells nothing but memory, all with a lifetime warranty. The memory configurator will point you to the chips that will work with your PC, with guaranteed compatibility.

memorysuppliers.com
MemorySuppliers.com's customer-friendly policies include $4.95 flat-rate shipping, a 30-day money-back guarantee with free return shipping, and lifetime warranties. The Memory Guides show how to install RAM and troubleshoot common memory problems.

monitorsdirect.com
MonitorsDirect specializes in Cornerstone, Hitachi, and Planar monitors, sold factory-direct. Extensive specifications, data sheets, and comparison tools will help you find the perfect display. Three- and five-year extended warranties are available.

mwave.com
Mwave.com sells a multitude of hardware products. The Top 10 Sellers and New Products pages bestow quick links to hot items. Check the Blow Out Specials for deals on as-is, refurbished hardware.

neutronexpress.com
You may get a charge out of shopping at **NeutronExpress.com,** where you'll find a dense nucleus of PC peripherals and networking hardware. Visit the Specialty sections for black PC components, plus low-profile and cordless peripherals.

newegg.com
Newegg.com is a nest of good stuff for do-it-yourself PC upgraders. The selection focuses on hard drives, motherboards, CPUs, and optical-storage add-ons.

Iomega Rev from Newegg.com

outpost.com
Shoppers at **Fry's Outpost.com** enjoy an ample catalog of hardware, software, cameras, and video games. Notable features include the Power Search function, special deals, and a 30-day money-back guarantee on most products.

pcliquidator.com
The getting's good at **PC Liquidator,** where the inventory is always changing and prices are always low. You might choose a "bit abused" Pentium II

PC for $29.99 or a 2GB hard drive for under $10. Check the Dollar Bin for ultracheap software and parts.

pcmall.com
Catering to consumers and businesses of all sizes, **PC Mall Sales'** catalog includes more than 100,000 products, with hot deals on notebooks and digital media. Sister site MacMall is devoted to Apple hardware and software.

radioshack.com
RadioShack will tempt you with gadgets galore, including electronics kits, OVO players, high-tech phones, and walkie-talkies. Thousands of product manuals are available online, too.

store.palmone.com
Put a personal digital assistant in your hand at the Palm Store, where **PalmOne** sells its popular Tungsten and Zire PDAs, plus software, accessories, and replacement parts. Visit the Factory Outlet for deals on refurbished and open-box models.

styluscentral.com
Use your mobile devices in style. **StylusCentral.com** has a large selection of POA styli, cases, and chargers, plus a complete line of accessories for the Apple iPod digital music player. You can have your initials engraved on many items for free.

tigerdirect.com
When you're looking for deals and discounts, look to **Tiger Direct.** This sizable catalog includes low-cost PC components, PDAs, and office equipment. Geeks on a budget can find desktop PCs for as little as $250, and laptops under $500.

unityelectronics.com
You may feel like one with the universe after browsing **Unity Electronics'** selection of PC peripherals. You'll also find new and refurbished hard drives, optical drives, and LCO monitors.

usbstuff.com
Looking for gadgets to plug into your Universal Serial Bus-equipped computer? **USB Stuff** has it all, including Webcams, CD-RW drives, printer adap-ters, and input devices. You'll also find USB microscopes, a terabyte hard drive, and other remarkable peripherals.

zones.com
There's a zone for whatever you need at **Zones:** the home page for hardware and software, the Mac Zone for Apple stuff, the Creative Pro page for graphics professionals, and Zones Clearance for special buys.

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abspc.com
Expect gaming, multimedia, and business PCs aplenty at **ABS Computer Technologies.** The company offers a choice of Intel or AMD processors, a three-year parts and lifetime labor warranty, and toll-free technical support. Every system includes a 30-day money-back guarantee.

alienware.com
Alienware can custom-build your dream game machine—desktop or laptop. Each is available with out-of-this-world cases in a rainbow of colors. Buyers get a personalized owner's manual and toll-free technical support any time of the day or night.

buympc.com
MPC Computers sells desktops, notebooks, and servers. You can custom-configure a high-performance Millennia desktop, tuned to your specifications, for business, multimedia, or gaming.

MPC's ClientPro 545

cyberpowersystem.com
Power up with a customized Intel or AMO system from **Cyberpower.** The selection includes cutting-edge 64-bit machines, gamers' dream systems, Media Centers, and budget PCs for everyday use.

dell.com
Dell's electronic storefront has always led the way in ease of use. The site is jam-packed with detailed information that makes it a snap to match a machine to your needs. Each system is configurable to the nth degree, and you can get quick access to online support customized for your PC.

falcon-nw.com
Once you get your talons on a **Falcon Northwest** PC, you won't want to let go. The heavyweight desktops and totable FragBox computers include the hardware you want, the way-cool look you crave, and the personalized system-rescue discs you may one day need.

gateway.com
One of the biggest players in online computer sales, **Gateway** has an enormous and informative site that sells custom-built desktops and notebooks and ships them for free. For your living room, Gateway also sells wide-screen plasma and LCO televisions.

hpshopping.com
At this site, choose between **Hewlett-Packard-** and Compaq-branded desktop and notebook computers, plus networking accessories, printers, handhelds, and digital cameras.

hypersonic-pc.com
Need computing power that's faster than fast? Go hypersonic. Check out **Hypersonic PC** for gaming systems, workstations, and laptops outfitted with the latest high-performance peripherals. "Enthusiast options" include 3D-graphics optimization and case customization.

ibm.com/products
IBM's staid site sells business and home PCs, notebooks, servers, peripherals, and refurbished PCs. Build-to-order options allow buyers to customize a new system.

ibuypower.com
iBuypower's value build-to-order PCs start at $400. Even the company's least-expensive PCs include DDR RAM, large hard drives, USB 2.0, and other impressive specs. All are backed by a 30-day money-back guarantee and lifetime tech support.

idotpc.com
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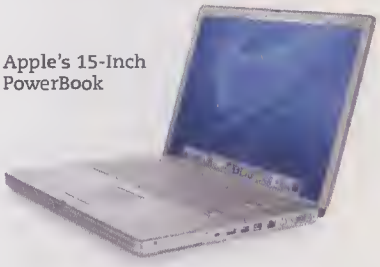
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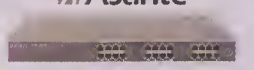

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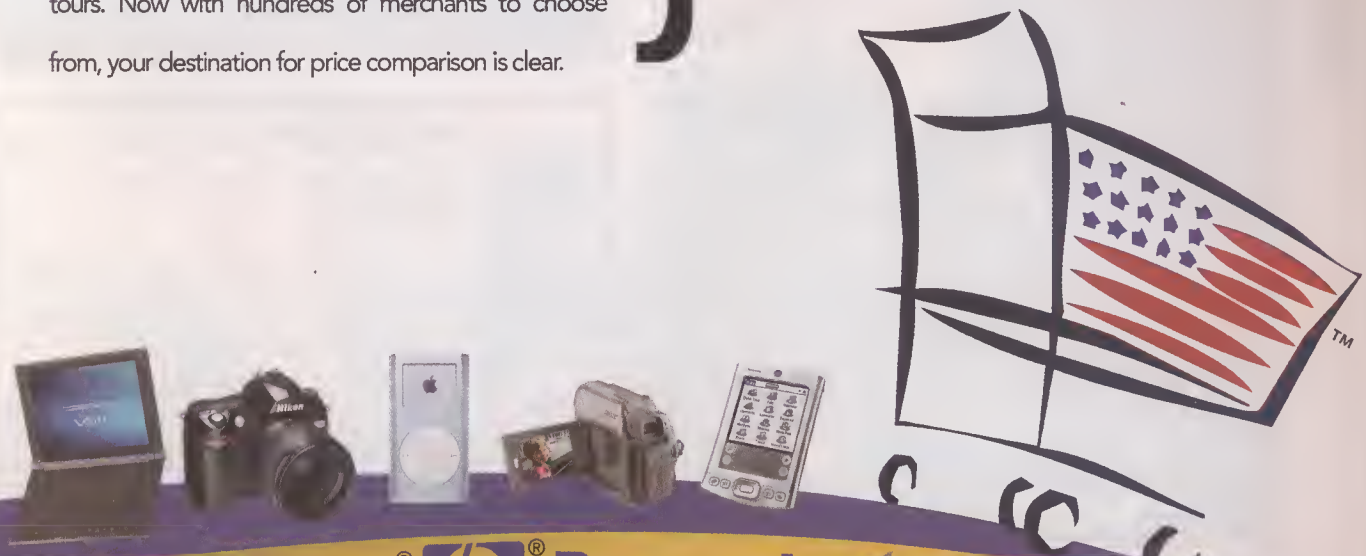

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$149 With Stand

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Includes:
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- Windows XP Home
- POS Software (installed with all POS hardware configured)
- Cash Drawer
- Receipt Printer
- Long Range CCD Bar Code Scanner

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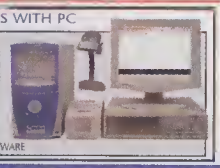
$ 2264 With: RMS STORE OPERATIONS POS SOFTWARE



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SPOTLIGHT

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"I collect timepieces. When I received my Steinhausen, I knew from the look, feel, and quality of the watch that this would be one of my favorites. I have spent thousands of dollars for inferior watches. It will be my gift of choice this holiday season." Sol S., Mt. Vernon, NY

So rare that only a handful were made in 1923

In 1923, a Swiss watchmaker crafted the most advanced watch of its time. After 80 years, the Steinhausen watch has finally been "reborn," preserving its mastery of technology and classic design. Once only displayed in high priced collections, this rare timepiece from history can now be yours.

Step back in time to Steinhausen, Switzerland circa 1923. A master watchmaker works for months, trying to create the world's most perfect watch. Finally he succeeds—the first of its kind to display the date, day and month, and the only one to designate AM/PM.

Collectors Pay Thousands $$$$

He makes a limited number of these distinctive handmade timepieces, which eventually find their way onto the wrists of only the world's most distinguished gentry. Today, collectors are willing to pay thousands of dollars to add one of these original Steinhausen masterpieces to their own collection.

Reborn After 80 Years

Until now, that was the only way you could own a Steinhausen, still one of the world's rarest and most prized wristwatches. But for the first time in 80 years, the original Steinhausen masterpiece is now being painstakingly reproduced for modern day collectors. Still manufactured by hand, this 21st-century reproduction carries the same graceful styling and features as the original. The scratch-resistant crystal comfortably rests in a surgical grade stainless steel case and bezel, which provides the ultimate in precision and protection.

Powered by You

This handsome timepiece has been updated with a kinetic automatic movement that is powered by the motion of the wearer's arm, so the watch never needs winding or batteries.

Hand-crafted Elite Movement

The Steinhausen movement consists of 185 parts, that are assembled entirely by hand. To prevent wear on gears, fine watches use tiny gemstones to reduce friction. The Steinhausen features up to 35 jewels, 15 more than most of the worlds elite watches. The movement is then rigorously tested for flaws and accuracy. Only 6% of the movements made ever meet the stringent requirements to be placed in this noble timepiece, making the Steinhausen one of the most accurate in the world.

THE STEINHAUSEN REBORN

Old world craftsmanship & new world technology

- Kinetic movement–requires no battery or manual winding.
- 185 precision parts assembled by hand.
- Interchangeable 8.25" leather black or brown bands.
- Handsome Storage Case.
- Polished stainless steel construction.
- Water resistant to 50 meters.

Kinetic movement...never needs batteries... never needs winding!

Adapted from Swiss Technology

A Swiss engineered movement comparable to the Steinhausen has never been produced at this low price. Each watch comes housed in a handsome storage case and includes two interchangeable leather wristbands in black and brown.

$14.95 "Wear It and Love It" Trial Offer

Until now, most of us couldn't afford an original 1923 Steinhausen. For a limited time though, the manufacturer has decided to offer this masterpiece of technology and design to watch lovers worldwide "risk free."

In fact, they are so confident you'll love the Steinhausen masterpiece, they want you to try it on your wrist for a full 30 days for **only** $14.95 plus s&h. Experience this unparalleled value for thousands less than comparable collectable watches. If not satisfied, return the Steinhausen for a full refund of the trial fee.

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THE HISTORY OF WATCH MAKING

- **1868** Patek Philippe makes first wrist watch
- **1923** Steinhausen masterpiece is created
- **1953** Lips produced the first battery powered watch
- **1953** 1st Automatic movamant in a wrist watch
- **1966** Girerd-Perragaux introduces the Swiss quartz watch
- **2003** Steinhausan masterpiece is reproduced for first time

*$14.95 Trial Offer entitles customers to receive one of our Steinhausen watches for review for 30 days with the right to return the watch in that period with no additional charges (minus s&h). Customers who elect to keep the watch will be billed the corresponding purchase price plus applicable taxes for the model they choose either in full or through available payment options.

The Right Graphics Card for Your Needs

BY SEAN PORTNOY

Whether you want to play the latest games, speed up video editing, or even watch television on your PC, a new graphics card is a great way to spruce up your system—but you'll have to break the bank for top performance.

YOUR POKY OLD GRAPHICS CARD or, worse, integrated graphics may have been okay for simple games and basic image editing, but if you're ready to graduate to 3D games or are planning a video-editing project, it's time for an upgrade. Here's what you need to know when selecting a new graphics card, whether you choose a budget tune-up or a no-holds-barred overhaul.

SHOPPING SPECS

GRAPHICS MEMORY

Unlike integrated graphics, which shares main system RAM, discrete cards have their own memory. More memory means better performance, improved 3D texturing, and higher possible display resolutions. Look for a minimum of 64MB of DDR SDRAM if you're not a hard-core gamer. If gaming's your thing, no less than 128MB or 256MB will do.

TV TUNER

A graphics card with a built-in TV tuner lets you watch your favorite channels on your PC and use your computer as a TiVo-style digital video recorder to save shows to your hard drive.

DIRECTX 9.0

The latest version of Microsoft's multimedia instruction set enhances DirectX 9.0-compatible graphics cards' ability to render more realistic visuals. Look for DirectX 9.0 support if you're planning to play the latest 3D games.

DVI PORT

Many of today's LCD monitors have Digital Visual Interface (DVI) connections, which provide image quality superior to that of the standard analog VGA interface. If the card you choose has a DVI port, you can take advantage of this improvement.

3 GREAT BUYS

GOOD

PNY Verto GeForce FX 5200 (www.pny.com, $69.99)
Powered by nVidia's GeForce FX 5200 graphics engine, PNY's budget Verto GeForce FX 5200 card lacks a DVI connection and TV capabilities, but it comes with 128MB of DDR SDRAM and DirectX 9.0 support for newer games.

BETTER

ATI All-in-Wonder 9600 XT (www.ati.com, $249)
The 128MB All-in-Wonder 9600 XT turns your desktop into a gaming machine and a television. It features a wealth of A/V connections, including TiVo-like digital-video-recorder capabilities, but it doesn't have a DVI connection.

BEST

ATI Radeon X800 XT Platinum Edition (www.ati.com, $499)
The most powerful card on the market at press time, the Radeon X800 XT Platinum Edition features 256MB of GDDR3 RAM and DVI support, along with top-of-the-line 3D-graphics-processing prowess.

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- Integrated Intel® Extreme Graphics 2
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- Monitor Not Included

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Recommended Upgrades:

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- Integrated Intel® Graphics Media Accelerator 900
- 48x CO Burner/DVD Combo Drive; Integrated Audio
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- 512MB DDR SDRAM
- 80GB[84] Hard Drive
- 24X CD Burner/DVD Combo Drive
- 32MB DDR NVIDIA® GeForce™ FX Go5200 AGP 4X Graphics
- 1-Yr Ltd. Warranty,[2] Mail-In Service and Tech Support

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- Integrated Intel® Extreme Graphics 2
- 16x DVD-ROM Drive
- Integrated Audio
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- 90-Day Limited Warranty,[2] 90-Day On-Site Service & 1-Yr Tech Support

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